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THE HONOURABLE FREDERIC WALPOLE, R.N.,
AND TO CAPTAIN
SIR WILLIAM HOSTE, BART., R.N.,
AS SAILORS, AND DEAR RELATIVES,
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AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

P R E F A C E.

IN putting forth another "Religious Novel," I would fain say a few words in—not excuse—but justification of such works, being aware that many excellent persons object to them.

It was through "Fiction" that our Lord conveyed many of His heavenly truths, introducing even suppositious appeals to God, and prayers for His mercy; and surely we cannot be wrong in venturing to follow his steps!

But it is the "Love" I am aware that is most objected to; but that objection I should like to be allowed to meet by repeating a few words of conversation on the subject, which proved effectual with a young "objecting" clergyman. .

"Would you tell me—which,—Religion, or Love, you would wish left out of your own life?"

"Neither, certainly."

"Then, if not out of real life, why out of the portraiture of real life?"

With regard to the present volume in particular, I cannot but anticipate one—(there may perhaps be many)—animadversion likely to be made: that there are too many conversions. But let it be considered in excuse, how delightful it is to convert when we have power,—to bring before oneself, even though only in imagination, the glorious burst of joy there is in Heaven "over one 'man' that has repented." In more solemn guise, I would say too, that I cannot but think that if real Christians

would more frequently speak, in truth, and earnestness, and love, and gentleness, of the beautiful things of God to those around them, they would find conversions not of so rare occurrence as now perhaps they think. It cannot have been to cast aside their labours, that our Lord has bid us pray that more labourers might be sent into His vineyard; and I cannot think that any who have zealously and lovingly worked for God in this life, will have to say,—when they have entered on the “deep dawn beyond the grave:” “Lord, we have toiled all night and yet caught nothing.”



INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

EXTRACT FROM "SIR ROLAND ASHTON."

The shade by which my life was cross'd,
Which makes a desert in my mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind.

In Memoriam.

[AMONG all Henry Ashton's companions, there was but one who excited any interest in him, and that was Mr. St. Clair, the first-lieutenant. He was a middle-aged man, with a grave but very beautiful countenance; and though he was one who spoke but little, yet that little was invariably kind and conciliating. A laugh or joke seldom indeed passed his lips, but no officer on board was more tolerant of the laughter and jokes of others. Even when the "sky-larking" of the half-crazy "mids" passed almost all bounds of endurance, and called forth hard words and severe looks from others in the ship, his indulgent smile, and kind excuse were ever ready.

"There's a great noise below there, Mr. St. Clair," the Captain would exclaim.

"Young spirits, sir, young spirits; all the better when work comes," would be the kind-hearted answer.

Yet, when in passing along the decks, his "Have a care, young gentlemen," was heard, it was invariably treated with respect; and the "Ay, ay, sir," was never more cheerfully returned than to him; while quiet would be for a moment restored.

The light-hearted beings over whom he exercised this "mild control," used among themselves to call him "St. John St. Clair," John being one of his Christian names; but the appellation was given in all kindness, for he was greatly beloved; and the strong religious opinions which suggested the name, bringing with them no harshness, were tolerated for his sake, and in many instances indeed became, through him, revered for their own.

Under circumstances of less intolerable suffering, Henry

Ashton would often have gladly conversed with him; but it was impossible for him to talk much on indifferent subjects, and the source of his affliction was one which he could lay open to no human eye, nor could he seek comfort under it from any human voice. Scarcely indeed to Heaven could he, at that distressful time, look for consolation; "*Il était triste de la tristesse, qui était alors le fond de sa vie*" (He was sad with the sadness, which was then the 'grounding' of his life), and all his energies seemed gone.

After cruising about for some time, the ship touched at Malta; and when there, Mr. St. Clair received a letter from a friend of his who had formerly sailed with Henry Ashton, and who made particular inquiries after him, asking if he were still the life of the crew as he had formerly been. Surprised at receiving a character of him so unlike what his present appearance warranted, Mr. St. Clair watched him more closely; and he soon became convinced that it was trouble of heart which had converted the once gay and high-spirited young sailor, into the silent, melancholy being who then trod the deck with so abstracted an air. This conviction aroused all his kindly feelings, and made him anxious, if possible, to assuage the sorrow of so young a heart.

When Henry's turn, therefore, came for keeping the first watch, he lingered some time on deck, waiting for an opportunity of quiet conversation with him. Henry, unaware of his object, took no notice of him, but continued his monotonous walk up and down in silence; till at length, full of his own sad thoughts, he stopped, and leant over the gangway, his face buried on his arm. A kind hand, laid on his shoulder, soon roused him from his reverie. He started, and was rather surprised at finding it was Mr. St. Clair's; for he had scarcely exchanged a syllable with him, excepting on matters of duty, since he had been on board.

"These night-scenes waken melancholy thoughts, Mr. Ashton," said the first-lieutenant.

"Not more so than sunshine," replied Henry, gloomily.

"Not if we like holding silent communion with the Father of our spirits," said Mr. St. Clair; "but otherwise darkness is generally felt to be a dreary thing."

"All times are much alike, I think," replied Henry.

"To me, I confess," said Mr. St. Clair, "these tranquil hours, when most of the poor fellows are below in their hammocks, are particularly delightful; the unusual quiet makes one more mindful of Him 'ne'er seen, but ever nigh.'"

Henry was silent, and again leant down his head.

"Has the thought of Him no charm for you, Mr. Ashton?" continued his kind companion.

"It used to have," answered Henry, without raising his head.

"You have not the look of one whom sin has separated from his God," said Mr. St. Clair, in a tone which would have unlocked the closest heart.

"No," said Henry; "I have sins enough certainly, but I have no fears of God's anger, though I cannot just now enjoy His love." His young heart was touched by Mr. St. Clair's manner; and with that yearning for commiseration so natural to all, especially to the young, when affliction is new and bewildering to them, he longed to pour forth all his miseries. But that was impossible. His troubles did not belong to himself alone; the most sacred feelings of others were involved in them, and those he could not betray.

"Prayer will bring back God's light into your heart, young man," replied Mr. St. Clair, in a softened voice; "no sorrow can withstand His gracious presence there. You have found that, I dare say, at times."

"I have never known sorrow till now," replied Henry.

"Then you must have had the life of one of a million," sighed his companion; "but nevertheless the burden is not the lighter because our shoulders are unaccustomed to bearing it. I don't seek your confidence as to your earthly trials—you can tell them to your God; and it is but poor pleasure to hear the record of sufferings which make one's heart bleed, while one cannot raise a finger in help. But a little word of God's peace will sometimes cheer a drooping spirit, if Satan's power be not too hard upon it. You seem, I am happy to see, to have some hope beyond this world."

"I had; but everything seems gone now!"

"Oh, that must not be," said Mr. St. Clair, with cheerful warmth; "you must rouse yourself, and not let the evil one gain so much advantage over you. Remember, doubting of God's mercy is a sore sin; and so is rejecting His consolations."

"I used to think," said Henry, "that sorrow would always raise the heart to God; but I find it far otherwise."

The recollection of his conversation with Lady Constance, when he was walking with her on the first day of his arrival at Llanaven, rushed over his mind at that moment, and completely overwhelmed him. He remembered so well his own words: "Joy on the one side, sorrow on the other, lift the soul to God;" and as he felt how little that was now his own experience, and as the memory of that delightful hour flashed across him, his spirits completely gave way, and a deep burst of grief broke for an instant the silence of the night.

Mr. St. Clair felt a painful compassion for this young and sorrowing heart, and spoke words of kindest sympathy. After a few moments Henry became more composed.

"I am very weak," he said ; " but I trust I shall be able to look more to God than I have done lately, and then I shall be strengthened."

Mr. St. Clair remained with him during the whole of his watch, walking up and down with him. In the course of their conversation, he adverted to circumstances in his own life which had shown forth the power of God to sustain under trial and affliction ; and as Henry Ashton expressed a wish to know what they were, he gave him the outline of a life which did indeed show that God is " a very present help in time of trouble."]

The outline of his life, which Mr. St. Clair gave that night to Henry Ashton, was afterwards more fully filled up during frequent conversations which they had together. For the sake of convenience, these detached accounts have been connected in a continuous form, while many events, with which it was impossible for Mr. St. Clair to be minutely acquainted, have been supplied from other sources.

THE FIRST-LIEUTENANT'S STORY.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all.

TENNISON.

"You have heard the youngsters on board here," said Mr. St. Clair, as he began his narrative, "call me by the name of John; to which they have added the blessed epithet of 'Saint,' but ill borne out, I fear, by any great holiness in me. But that is not my first Christian name; Wilfred is the name by which I used to be called; but I had a fancy—a silly one perhaps—which made me shrink from hearing it used now, so have always called myself by my other. I only mention this, because in saying what I am about to say, you might be puzzled in hearing of me with an 'alias.'"

Well, you must know that some years ago—it was in the year twenty-five—when I was little more than a lad, our ship was cruising in the Mediterranean, and, running up the Gulf of Genoa, anchored for a time off Nice, where we all of course in turn obtained leave to go ashore.

I was wandering about there alone one beautiful summer's evening, delighted to have the springing grass once more beneath my feet, and to exchange the tarry atmosphere of the ship for the scent of the wild flowers which bloomed in profusion all around. The sun was sinking; and I had been watching its downward course, and the red clouds that followed its disappearance, when, through the thickening gloom, my eye caught another light, which I perceived must proceed from some burning building. I rushed up the little knoll which hid that part of the town and shore from me, and then saw that a solitary house, standing near the sea, was in one blaze of fire.

In a moment I was before it, in the midst of a motley crowd

of sympathizing, but paralyzed spectators, who were venting in the wildest exclamations their grief and horror at the work of destruction going on; which feelings were raised to frenzy, a moment after, by the sight of an old man and a young girl suddenly coming out on one of the stone balconies which belonged to each window, their figures clearly defined against the glowing fire, which seemed to fill the whole interior of the house.

Exclamations of "Salvatela," "La poveretta," "La bella," ("Save her," "The poor thing," "The beautiful,") resounded on all sides, accompanied by the frantic gesticulation and vehement action natural to the Italian; while no one seemed to do anything, or to know indeed what to do. No ladder was at hand; so I ran down to some boats which were lying on the shore, intending to unstep some of the masts, and see what I could do with them. There I found some of my own men bound on the same errand; so in a few moments we had secured two of the highest we could find, and carrying them up to the burning house, we spliced them strongly together, to make them reach the window at which the old man and girl were standing, when I swarmed up them, as none but a monkey or sailor can do, and having reached the balcony, jumped over it, and, without wasting a moment, was about to put my arm round the girl to carry her down, when she drew back, exclaiming in English, "Save him first," and pointing in frightful agony to her father.

I tried still to save her, but she kept retreating backwards, almost into the flames; till seeing that time was being lost, I took hold of the old man, who, being thin and emaciated, was happily of light weight, and, without the least warning, lifted him over the balustrade, to which I left him to cling by natural instinct, till I could get over myself, and prepare to slide down the mast with my burden.

Difficult at all times it would be to slide down from such a height with the weight of another person on one's arm, on such poles too, with their splicing cords tearing one's hands to pieces; but with that old man I thought I never could have reached the ground in safety, for he struggled the whole way so violently as made it almost impossible to hold him, while he poured forth such volleys of execrations in my ear for having saved him first instead of his child, that had it not been for that child's sake, I think I should have complied with his ceaseless orders to "let him go," and have shaken him off, and let him take his chance of the fall. However, I held him firm till we came within a yard of the ground, when, letting him drop, without waiting to see what happened to him, up I was again, in an agony to save the devoted girl who had risked her life for her parent.

Seeing that my hands were bleeding, one of my sailors called to me to let him go aloft this time; but nothing could have induced me to have given up the joy of rescuing a being in whose safety I then felt such an intense interest. It was no thought, however, of love, which at that moment influenced me—for had it been a boy who had acted in that way, I should have felt just the same—and as to beauty, I had seen nothing of that to inspire me, for even if I had had time to look, her clothes and face were all so covered with smoke, that she might have been as fair as an angel, or as black as night, for anything that I could see.

Her situation was indeed most perilous at that moment, for the flames had gained such a height that they burst out incessantly through the window before which she was standing. She had had sufficient presence of mind, however, to get on the outside of the balustrade, wrapping close round her the folds of the large shawl she had on; and then clinging on for her life, she endured with wonderful fortitude the raging heat, sheltering her face as best she could, but being forced to allow her hands to be scorched terribly by the flames. Her head was so covered up, and the roar of the fire was so loud, that she did not know I was near her again till I put my arm round her, and told her to let go, and trust herself to me. At the sound of my voice she lifted up her head; and then indeed, spite of the smoke and dust, I met a look that sank for ever into my heart.

In a moment I began my second descent,—but how different were my feelings to what they had been before! Instead of a furious old man, struggling with rage, and pouring forth abuse in the shrill voice of querulous age, I had one who, save from her slight weight, added nothing to my difficulties; but who, clinging to me with self-preserving impulse, breathed into my very heart words of gratitude and blessing, as the saviour of her father and herself. I felt then, through all that pain and peril, what I have never ceased to feel—the blessedness of loving, and of being able to help those one loves! Yes, at that moment I felt as if my fate were bound up with that heroic girl's for ever; and though, I dare say, had we parted immediately after, that feeling would have passed off and have been remembered merely as the fleeting emotion of an excited moment, yet as we were not so soon to part, it deepened on, till it became the life of my life—the joy of my life—the sorrow of my life!

During our descent, there was not a breath heard among the dense crowd below,—though at the moment that I had taken my charge from the scorching of the flames, a wild cry of exultation had arisen; but when, having successfully performed the difficult descent, I gave the girl into the outstretched arms

of her father, such acclamations as I had never before heard, rent the sky.

Ungracious as the old man had been before, the moment that his child was in safety, his gratitude seemed to know no bounds. He seized my bleeding hands, and kissed them convulsively, whilst he called me by every good name his grateful heart could suggest. At length I disengaged myself from him,—for I ought long ago to have been back on board ship,—and stammering something about “pleasure at having been of service,” &c., I turned, with rather a heavy heart, to make my way back to my boat. But that was not to be—quietly at least; for the people, who had pressed closely around us, set up another deafening shout as soon as my intention was perceived, and in a moment I found myself hoisted up aloft on the shoulders of the nearest men, and about to be carried in triumph to the shore.

I was nothing loth, for I was young and full of spirits, and thought it very pleasant to be the hero of the moment. I had been full of sweet and gentle emotions a moment before, but my old light-heartedness returned in an instant, when I found myself thus suddenly “famous;” and as I looked back in triumph at those I was leaving, I was more than amused, I was pleased to my heart, by the joyous look of the girl, whose animation beamed through all the disfigurement the fire had made, with a charm no look had ever before possessed for me, while the old man seemed to forget everything in his enthusiasm, and waved his hand on high, as his voice was raised above that of the whole crowd, in loud and long hurrahs. At length I was quietly seated in my boat, and my fine fellows were pulling away with all their strength, to make up for the lost time.

So rapidly does nightfall in those lands succeed the setting of the sun, that by the time we reached the ship everything was nearly enveloped in darkness, save from the ruddy glow of the still flaming house, whose fierce reflection lay broken and dancing on the waters astern of the boat, and which lit up every rope and spar of the frigate when we approached her, as clearly as daylight. The other side of the vessel lay in deep shade, and the calm waters of the bay received and returned faithfully the perfect shadow of her beautiful proportions, as they were cast on them by the bright flames from the shore.

Very different was the tone of feeling with which I was received on board from that which I had left on shore. The captain—Captain Normanton—was a jealous-spirited man, and enough had been visible of what had gone on at the fire, through the ship's glasses, to make him fully aware that I had borne rather an active part there; and my triumphant mode of con-

veyance from the flaming pile to the boat, seemed to have raised a feeling of great displeasure in his breast. My reception, therefore, was by no means a gracious one, and instantly dashed to the ground all the high spirits with which I had run up the ship's side.

"You have broken your leave, Mr. St. Clair," he said, in a quiet, cutting tone.

"I am very sorry, sir; but just as I was going to join my boat, I saw that house on fire yonder, and I thought you could not be displeased ——"

"But I am displeased, sir!" he exclaimed, in an angry voice; "nothing can be said in excuse of disobedience. The discipline of the service is at an end, if the catching fire of every Italian vagabond's house is to put a commanding officer's word aside. I give up my command if that is the case, sir!" And he tossed up his hands, as if he were casting his commission to the winds.

"I am very sorry, sir," I began.

"You are not very sorry, sir," he interrupted.

"Indeed, sir," I attempted again to begin.

"Don't contradict me, sir! go below, sir. You shall hear of this again. Go below, sir."

I descended the hatchway as fast as I could, as much pleased to get out of his sight, as enraged at the manner of my dismissal.

The next day I longed to go on shore, for I had an intense wish to see the old man, or at least his daughter, again. I had, as I have said, but little idea what she was like; and I had a hope, not to be wondered at, of finding her lovely and delightful, so that nothing might break the charm with which my present thoughts of her were filled. But I might as well have expected to have been made grand seignior, as to have been allowed to put foot on shore for days to come; and I had just wisdom enough to keep me from asking it. But I could not repress a feeling of annoyance when I heard the Captain order out his boat to take him on shore, and saw him go down the ship's side, the measured strokes of the oars, all cleaving the waters as if worked by but one pair of hands, falling painfully on my ear.

As the boat neared the shore, an apprehension seized me, lest the Captain should see her of whom I was thinking so much, and whom I felt a selfish wish at that moment to hide from every eye. I seemed to have a right to her beyond all others, and fretted myself into a fever of irritation and jealousy on the subject, as foolish as it was painful.

The Captain returned to the ship in a mood not much sweeter than that in which he had left it. He went on shore again the next day, and the next, and the next; while I was forced to remain on board, in a state of irritation and vexation difficult to describe. I dreaded, too, that we might leave the place without my being able to go again on shore; and such was the fever of excitement to which I worked myself up, that all sorts of wild ideas crossed my brain, and I determined that, should that be the case, I would desert—swim ashore in the night-time, and lie hid till the vessel was gone—anything, in short, rather than leave the place without again seeing her whom I had saved. More rational ideas, however, returned in a short time; and before doing anything desperate, I bethought me of using the simple expedient of asking leave again.

I did so the next day, and was not refused. The Captain's countenance, however, betrayed displeasure and annoyance, even to a more than usual degree, and I was struck by a restlessness and anxiety in his look and manner, which I had never observed before.

As the time for my going drew near, his uneasiness visibly increased. He stopped several times in his ceaseless paces up and down, as if with an intention of speaking to me; but glancing round, and always seeing some one else near, he passed on again. At length, with an evident effort, he bade me follow him to his cabin. I did so with a trembling heart; but when the door was shut behind me, I am mistaken if his pulse beat not three to one of mine. Well I know, at least, that while my eye was steadily raised to his, his fell beneath mine, and he seemed anything but at his ease.

"Mr. St. Clair," he began, in a deprecating manner, and in the mildest tones I had ever heard come from his lips, "you were rather over your leave the last time you went on shore."

"I was, sir," I answered, all my irritation vanishing in an instant under his kindness of manner; "I was very sorry for it, and will take care it shall not be the case again; but, in fact, I thought of nothing when I saw human lives in danger."

"Quite right—quite right," he replied; "I should have done the same in your place. I was angry at the time—perhaps rather too much so; but discipline must be maintained, and I did not then know all the circumstances. I have since learnt them; for I met—accidentally—one day—those whom you saved—and they spoke very handsomely of your conduct."

This was said with a degree of hesitation and embarrassment which I should have been at a loss to account for, had not my jealous fancy at once taken fire, and convinced me that it pro-

ceeded from the Captain's having not only seen, but fallen in love with the young lady.

The fury that possessed me at this idea, I cannot describe. I felt like a hungry wolf from whom the prey had been snatched,—a lioness robbed of her young,—anything, in short, blind with fury and revenge. Evil passions rose in my breast like a whirlwind, and shook my whole frame. I had no internal principle then to oppose to the violent feelings of my violent nature, but was a perfect slave to them; and nothing but the severe discipline which, happily for me at that moment, the Captain certainly maintained, could have prevented me from some furious outbreak. I could have rushed upon him, strangled him, chucked him through the window, or performed any, or every other prank of absurd insanity and horror.

And all for what? I have often thought of it since. Because the poor man told me he had seen a young girl, whom I could scarcely have been said even to have seen myself, but to whom I chose to fancy I had an exclusive right!

But it is useless to argue these matters. It is not the thing, as it seems in outward appearance alone, that constitutes the thing as it really is. The feelings on which it falls characterize it. "*La chose actuelle et la chose sensible*," (The actual thing and the thing as felt), are often mightily different things. A note of music, a flower, a sunset, are matters of indifference to some, rapture to some, agony to some. Yet it is but one note, one flower, one sunset. Truly, "the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy!"

And yet it was not merely that Captain Normanton had seen this object of my imagined love,—for had he said freely and openly that he had done so, I should perhaps have thought nothing of it, but been rather gratified at thinking that something might have been said in my favour,—but it was his concealing it at first, and then speaking of it with such confusion, that disturbed my mind, and gave to the whole thing a character of importance which time, alas! proved that it too truly possessed.

I had, however, to answer him, which I did by uttering some unintelligible sounds about "duty," and "happiness," and so forth; my voice trembling so with suppressed emotion, that I was in terrible fear lest he should observe it. He seemed to make out more of my meaning, however, than I did myself, for he told me "my sentiments did me honour," and that "he should not fail to remember my conduct;" and so dismissed me, nothing loth, to go on shore.

CHAPTER II.

They that love early become like-minded—
 They grow up leaning on each other, as the olive
 and the vine.

Youth longeth for a kindred spirit, and yearneth
 for a heart that can commune with his own.

Proverbial Philosophy.

I WENT on shore, and lost no time in trying to discover my new friends; and after a few inquiries, I found myself opposite the new abode of "General Sydney" and his daughter.

But how unlike the old! That had been a large, fine, ornamented house, standing alone, looking on the bay in front, and with beautiful gardens behind, all speaking of wealth, and even grandeur. This was a retired dwelling, in a dark street, having an air scarcely of respectability, certainly not comfort, and surrounded by a dense and shabby population. I stood a moment at the door, thinking it impossible that it could be the house; then determining in my heart that it *should not* be, I was turning away, when a little Italian barber opposite,—having been watching me it seemed, and having, with the intuitive quickness of his nation, gathered from my dress and countenance the story of my expectation and disappointment,—rushed across the narrow street, and with nods innumerable, showered with a rapidity I had thought human muscles incapable of, assured me that it was the house I was seeking.

"La casa del Generale Sydney!" (The house of General Sydney!) I exclaimed, less in a tone of inquiry, than of indignant remonstrance.

"Sicuro, sicuro, 'cellenza," (Certainly, certainly, Excellency,) he replied, recommencing the incredible nods, which my speaking had suspended for a moment; while, stepping quickly forward, he briskly rang the bell, to prove his moral certainty of the fact, his countenance all the while beaming with delight at the pleasure of knowing he was right, and of setting me so too. In a moment, however, the bright look faded, and the nods became slower, and intermingled with gentle shakes, as, in a feeling, sympathizing tone, he began speaking of their late misfortune,—going on with a rapid harangue, of which, with my then very imperfect knowledge of his language, I could merely catch a few words, such as "disgrazia, incendio," &c. (misfortune, fire, &c.)

I could have hugged him for his kind feeling for them; but

at that moment the door opened, and his vivacity instantly returning, before I could speak a word, he had asked whether, "Il Signor Generale," or "La Signorina," were at home; and receiving a reply in the affirmative, he turned on me a look of ineffable triumph, and making me welcome, by a flourish of his hand, to the entry of the dark door and darker passage, he bounded again across the street, and by the time I had turned to thank him, he was again *encadré* (framed) in his own doorway, amid his "cinque perrucche e pomata fina" ("five wigs, and fine pomatum").

How strange it seems now! But in going over these things again, I feel for the moment quite like my old self. I seem to take myself by the arm as it were, and walk with myself through these scenes, just as one might accompany any other friend, but with this notable difference—that it is only the outward things in which one can accompany another, whilst, in accompanying one's past self, all the feelings, and emotions of the *then* heart, all the sorrows or brightness of the *then* spirits, rise up into life once more, and become, for the moment one's own again.

I see that little barber standing in his doorway as distinctly, now that I am talking of him, as if I were still talking to him; and the merriment he caused me flashes up again once more, as if there had not been since mountains of trouble, and rivers of tears, to crush and extinguish it.

I was at that time so very light-spirited, that the merest nothing would send me off into fits of laughter. I don't think that up to that time I could ever have been said to really think of anything,—though I was always fond of reading, of poetry, of music, of the beautiful of all kinds! But as to feeling, I was like a dog, or a cat, or a robin, or wren, or anything that just feels what it feels at the minute, and forgets it the next; and being full of life and spirits, mirth and merriment had formed the main part of my waking existence. I don't often feel inclined to laugh now, but I thank God from my heart for the cheerful spirit He still gives me; and am glad always to sympathize with every burst I hear come from hearts as yet unsubdued by trouble.

Well! after losing sight of my animated, but tender-hearted barber, I followed the servant along the gloomy passage. My thoughts had been a little distracted by my colloquy at the door from the anxious anticipations which had, for days before, occupied them; but now again they rushed upon me with that force

which every one with strong feelings has probably felt, but of which to others it is vain to speak ; and when I got to the door, which was as the veil which divided the imaginary from the real, my heart literally ceased to beat.

It seems all very foolish now, but imagination has wondrous power, and there is but one other, that I know of, that can control its exciting force. Of that power I knew nothing then !

When the drawing-room door opened, I found it an apartment far better than the entrance side of the house would have led me to suppose ; and the windows, opening to the ground, showed a cool and leafy garden beyond, whose grateful fragrance was delightful, as I left the dark, dank passage, and entered again the "warm precincts of the cheerful day." The objects of my search were not in the heated room, they had wisely sought the green shelter of the garden.

The servant, having pointed them out to me, left the apartment, rather to my dismay, leaving me to introduce myself ; but, after pausing a moment in great perturbation, I summoned up courage, and stepped out on the terrace which was under the window. The sound of my footsteps caused the old man's daughter—for as yet I had not learned to think of her by any other name—to turn her head, as she was sitting reading under the flickering shadow of some flowering tree—the profile of the whole so beautiful ! On seeing me she started, though almost imperceptibly, the faint colour leaving her cheek, and her countenance showing fear and trouble. In another instant, however, the whole expression of her face changed,—the crimson blood flushed up again to her very temples, and hastily rising, she flew past the old man, who was sitting with his back towards me, and meeting me just as I had descended a few steps of the terrace, caught my extended hand in both of hers—forgetful, as she afterwards told me, of everything but that I had saved their lives—and burst into tears.

I did not know what to do,—I was young and unmannered, and I remember I could only keep repeating, "Oh don't, don't," in the utmost distress. But my embarrassment was soon relieved by the old man's suddenly turning round in his chair, having been awakened from his noon-day sleep by his child's dress brushing past him ; when, seeing her in tears by my side, he exclaimed, in a shrill tone,—

"Eh ! what's the matter—what's the matter ? What are you crying for there with that young man ? Who is he ? How came he here ?"

His daughter, who could not help smiling, spite of her tears, went up to him, as he still kept angrily eyeing me, and said something to him in a low voice, I standing meanwhile where she left me, frightened out of my senses.

"Eh—what?" he exclaimed again, hastily.

"The young officer," I heard her say, her voice trembling between laughing and crying, "who saved us from the fire."

"Eh! you don't say so!" And putting his hands on his knees, he sprang up like a grasshopper, and bounding towards me, quicker than even his daughter had done, he in his turn grasped my hand in both of his, then put his arm round my shoulder, patting me on the back, and striving by dumb show to express the emotion and pleasure which his agitated lips could not speak.

I too felt choking; so for a time not a word was spoken, as we all three stood together smiling through our tears, and crying through our smiles, till at last the old man suddenly exclaimed,—

"How are your hands, though? you had torn the skin all off them."

"Oh, they are quite well now," I answered, disengaging them from his firm hold, and stretching them out to show how perfectly they were healed.

"And yours?" I added, turning to his daughter.

She extended hers too, to show that they also had recovered all ill effects of the fire; and the contrast between her small white ones and my large sun-burnt ones, as we stretched them out together, was so strange, that it turned the scales quite to the side of smiles, and in an irresistible peal of laughter we found relief at last for our excited spirits.

We now unreservedly wiped our eyes, and sat down together to be very merry; but a wearied, abstracted air soon stole over the old man's face, and in a little while he had fallen asleep again.

"He gets tired so soon," said his daughter, in a low voice; "and since that frightful day he has seemed much shaken."

"How did the fire happen?" I asked.

"No one knows; but it was so rapid that we lost almost everything. But, however, all lives were saved, so we should be thankful. The servants were all below, and easily got out; and—you saved us."

Her eyes met mine as she said this, and her lip again quivered. I looked away, and could not answer her, for I had entered on a new existence, whose language I did not know. After a time I stammered out,—

"Your father is General Sydney, is he not?"

"Yes," she replied.

"And your name is——"

"Mary Terèsa Sydney."

"Why do you call it Terèsa, and not Theresa?"

"Because it is Terèsa, and not Theresa," she replied, with an amused expression of countenance. "It was my mother's name; she was an Italian."

"An Italian!" I exclaimed; betraying in my tone somewhat of my English prejudices. "However, that accounts for it."

"Accounts for what?"

"For your dark eyes, and your way of speaking many words not quite like other people."

"I am sorry you say that," she replied, rather mortified. "I thought I spoke quite like an Englishwoman. I have tried very much."

"Why? do you like the English so much?"

"Surely I do; my father is English. Yet *I* love the Italians too."

This was said with a little look and emphasis which clearly established her claim to her foreign origin; while it also proved that she had read my prejudices but too clearly in my tone.

"Of course you do," I said, trying to mend the matter a little; "why should you not? But I never knew any Italians."

"I consider myself, however, more English than Italian," she added; "though I have never yet seen England."

"Why, has your father always lived here?"

"Always since my birth. My mother died here ten years ago, when I was but seven years old, and he could never afterwards bear to leave the place; though he has often talked of going to his own country."

"And have you always lived alone with that old—I mean, with your father?"

Her eye had glanced up quickly at my first irreverential term; but seeing that I had corrected myself, she took no notice of it, but looking at her father as he slept, with great affection, she answered,—

"Yes, always; his relations were far off, and so were mine. But then he never left me, and I was quite happy."

"Had you no companions living with you?"

"None, but him."

"But you lived in such a large house?"

"Yes; and it was very pleasant. We had our winter and our summer rooms. Oh! I was so happy there!" and a sadness overspread her face. "But it is very foolish," she added, "and very wrong to grieve, for we are so comfortable here; and if I did not think about the old house being gone, it would be

just the same to me now in this little garden, as it used to be, when, as a great pleasure, my father used to bring me here sometimes, and we had a little feast—for this is my nurse's house—and she loved to have me here; and my father liked better to come to her, for a time, than to take another house just at this moment. So the only difference lies in my foolish thoughts, except, to be sure, you were not here then."

"And does that make it more disagreeable?" I asked, wanting her to say something pleasant to me.

"No," she said, with simplicity; "I only meant that you *were not* here then, and that that *was* a difference."

"It makes a great difference to me, I know, being here or not."

She seemed embarrassed, and so was I; and there was a terrible pause. At last she asked me,—

"Have you a father?"

"No."

"Nor brothers, nor sisters?"

"No; nothing but a mother."

"You were as lonely then as I, with only her."

"Yes, but then I have never been much at home, of late years; always at school or at sea."

"How sad your mother must be then, living all—quite alone!"

"I suppose she is; but, somehow, I never thought of it before."

"Not think of your mother!" she exclaimed, looking at me with astonished eyes.

"Oh yes, I always thought of her, of course; but I never thought whether she was happy or not. I am sure if I had thought she was unhappy, I would have done anything for her."

"I dare say you would," she said; "you don't look unkind."

I was pleased at her saying that, and was silent for a moment, when she said,—

"You asked me my name, just now, and I told you; will you tell me yours?"

"Wilfred John St. Clair," I said.

She smiled, as if she liked the name; and I thought it had never sounded so well to my own ear before.

"Your father must have been very much older than your mother," I then said; "at least I should think so, you seem so very young to be his child."

"Yes, he was many years older. But he had been very kind to her family during the troubles in her country, and they were all so fond of him; and though not young, he was still so handsome, they have told me, and loved her so very much."

"Ah! then I don't wonder at her marrying him. I could marry any one that loved me much."

"That is saying a great deal," she observed, with rather a heightened colour.

"Oh! I mean, of course, any one that I loved too."

"Why, yes; so, I suppose, could any one."

"Yes, I suppose so," I said; rather confused at finding that I was putting forth inevitable truisms as original discoveries; and troubled still more at perceiving the quiet suppression of a half-smile on my companion's sweet hilarious countenance.

I was not easily daunted, but I cannot say how completely that little half-smile upset me. I should not have minded it nearly so much if she had laughed openly; but the consideration which she, in her kindness, showed for my feelings, hurt them all the more, and vexed me unreasonably.

Oh! how often did that same touchiness of temper which I then chose, as so many others do, to dignify by the name of sensitiveness, and delicacy of feeling—how often did it afterwards grieve and wound that gentle, playful being, whose own blessed temper was ever as far from taking as from giving offence!

I sat silent, half-confused, half-angry, till the striking of one of the church-clocks reminded me that the time allowed for staying on shore was fast passing away. I had other things to do before returning on board, but I could not bear to go with an unpleasant feeling on my mind. I strove for something to say but could find nothing. At last, to my great relief, she asked,—

"Do you go soon from this place?"

"I do not know; we may be off to-morrow, or we may stay a month. It all depends on the good pleasure of our Captain."

A sudden flush of colour on her cheek, as I said this, recalled in an instant all the suspicions I had formed concerning her and him. They had never once occurred to me before during my visit, but now they pressed so thickly on my mind, that my breath came quick and short; and by one of those flashes of thought, which throw a sudden light on past things which have been unobserved at the moment, I immediately connected his idea with the little start and change of colour I had observed on my first entrance into the garden. I resolved instantly to ascertain the state of the case, though the bare thought of mentioning it threw me into such an agitation that I trembled all over. I had no genius for diplomacy; and the only way that ever suggested itself to my mind of finding out a thing was asking about it, so I said,—

"There is one thing that I want very much to ask you, if I may."

"What is it?" she said, with a quickness which yet suited well with her childlike simplicity of manner.

"It is: why did you start, and change colour, and look frightened, when you first saw me here in this garden?"

"I did not know that I did change colour, and look frightened," she replied, the blood again flushing her cheeks; "though I remember starting."

"But why did you do that?"

"I only saw the colour of your uniform at first, and I thought it was your captain."

"And why should you start at seeing him? Don't you like him?"

My breath came quite cold through my lips as I listened for her reply; but not very long had I to wait, for she answered quickly,—

"No, I do not like him much."

"Thank God!" I exclaimed, drawing a long breath of relief.

"Why?" she asked, looking at me in amazement.

"Oh, I don't know; only I felt that your liking him would have made me very miserable."

"Is he, then, so bad a man?"

"Oh, no! not exactly bad; but we don't like him very much on board. But why don't you like him?"

"Oh, for nothing particular; but I don't like his conversation or manner. I always feel frightened when I am with him, though I really don't know why."

"Does he come here often, then?"

"No, I have only seen him here once; but he has come several times to a friend's, where I often spend my mornings."

"And you are sure you don't like him?"

"Quite sure."

"Then I don't care if he likes you ever so much,—for he does like you, doesn't he?"

"I think he does a little," she replied; "and sometimes that frightens me. But I ought not to have said this, perhaps; so I beg you, very much, do not repeat it to any one. I am sure you will not."

"Not for worlds," I replied, my heart bounding with happiness at what she had told me, and touched to the quick, too, by the confidence she had shown me. Her colour had become much higher from the little excitement of this conversation; and when she raised her eyes with grateful kindness to mine, I thought I had never—and I never had—seen anything so beautiful!

As I assured her that, "not for worlds would I repeat what she had said," I involuntarily held out my hand, half in pledge of my truth, and half in—I know not what—of feeling towards

her. She rose, seemingly not liking to understand my action but as a farewell; yet her countenance showed that she felt it was not meant for that. With some emotion she said,—

“We shall, perhaps, see you again before you go; but if not—remember that you saved us, and that—we are grateful.”

“If I may come again,” I replied, much moved, “I shall most joyfully do so.”

“Come again!” exclaimed the old general, starting up, suddenly awakened by our rising, “oh! to be sure, whenever you like; we shall always be delighted to see you.”

Thanking him most sincerely for his cordial words, and shaking hands with them both, I then took my leave; joyful—oh, how joyful!—at having found the bright image of my imagination more than answered by the brighter reality, and gratified and enchanted beyond words at the gracious reception I had met with.

CHAPTER III.

Dependence is his strength, and, behold! he prayeth.

Proverbial Philosophy.

CAPTAIN NORMANTON continued frequently to go on shore; and, emboldened by my late success, I asked to do so also several times, and getting leave, paid regular visits, of course, at General Sydney's. Each time that I saw Miss Sydney, I felt more for her than before; but as my visits were often, as it would so happen, paid at an earlier hour of the day than on the first occasion, General Sydney was always awake and alive, which, though he was clever and agreeable, and had much to say, did not please me so well as being able to talk to his daughter alone. I tried, therefore, to make my next trip on shore at a later period of the day, and happily succeeded.

On arriving at the house, I found them sitting as usual in the garden, and was rejoiced to see that the old man was again sleeping in his chair.

“Do not wake him for me,” I said to his daughter, as she was about to rouse him; “it is such a pity to disturb his rest.”

“It is,” she replied; and she quietly sat down again, and took up her work.

I sat down too; but of all the thousand topics that the world contains, not one could I find to touch upon; and I began to fear that this longed-for visit would pass away without any of

the pleasure I had promised myself in it. After some little time, however, Miss Sydney said,—

"Is not your vessel staying here longer than you at first expected?"

"Yes," I replied. "You will remember that when you asked me, on my first visit, about the length of our stay, I told you that it all depended on the good pleasure of our Captain. It seems now, that his good pleasure is that we should remain, for which I am not disposed to quarrel with him; though you, probably, Miss Sydney, know better than any of us what keeps him here."

She did not answer directly, but her colour rose, and continued mounting higher and higher. But after a few moments she raised her eyes, in which there was an expression of trouble, and somewhat of displeasure, and replied,—

"I once foolishly answered a question, Mr. St. Clair, which you asked me, concerning Captain Normanton; but I do not like to hear his feelings spoken of lightly, even if they are not returned."

"If they are not returned!" I exclaimed, with bitterness; "is there then a doubt in the case, Miss Sydney?—are you so much changed?"

"No," she replied, raising again her softened eyes, "I can never change; but I have learned to feel for him more than I did, and am often unhappy about him now. But I am afraid I spoke too angrily."

"No, you did not," I replied; "the fault was all mine. I ought not to have spoken so lightly, for I can well feel what it must be not to be loved by you. Miss Sydney," I continued, with sudden and violent impulse, "you do not love Captain Normanton; but you must—you must love me—for I love you so very much!—so very much!"

She seemed excessively startled by my sudden avowal; and I confess I was myself terrified the moment after, at the audacity and precipitation with which I had made it. She sat silent—evidently could not speak.

"Will you not answer me?" I said, after waiting a moment in mortal fear; "will you not give me a hope that you will return my love?"

"I have thought of you and of your kindness so often," she replied, gently, "that, next to my father, there is none I do like so much as you."

I was deeply touched by so undeserved an answer, made in the simple truth of her beautiful nature, and was too happy to be vexed, even at the reservation she had made,—loving her indeed the better, for that sweet constancy of mind which would not let

her give up one, who had been all to her for so long, for me, the acquaintance of a day.

"And will you, then, marry me, Miss Sydney," I said in an almost inarticulate tone, "when we are old enough?"

"If my father will let me, I will," she replied, earnestly and solemnly.

She rose, and stooped over him again, to try and awaken him; but his sleep was sound, and she could not rouse him by her gentle efforts.

"Don't disturb him," I said; "I shall, please God, see you and him again, and then I will ask his consent. I hope I have not done wrong, Miss Sydney, in speaking as I have; I did not mean it when I came here, but somehow I could not help it."

"No, you have not done wrong," she replied, raising her large eyes, full of feeling, to mine; "I have only promised in case of his consent, and if he give it, we know it will be right. Good-bye now," and she held out her hand to me.

"Good-bye," I said. "You have been very kind to me, much kinder than I deserve, or could have thought possible; but I hope I shall never be unworthy of it,—I am sure I shall never cease to love you. But, before I go, will you give me something to keep for your sake?—anything."

She thought for a moment, then turned to the little table which stood by with her work, and gave me a letter-case of her own embroidery. She had been working it, she said, for her father, but would do him another. I took it, and it has never left me from that hour.

I rushed down to the shore, having hurriedly got over a few other things I had to do, and finding my men ready, pushed off directly, and arrived at the ship's side just in time not to be too late.

Captain Normanton happened to be on deck as I mounted the side, so could not avoid seeing my arrival. I observed a cloud pass over his face; but, in a voice which I think he tried to make kind, he said,—

"You are back in good time to-day, Mr. St. Clair."

"Barely, I am afraid, sir."

"Have you ordered the case, and told the man about the desk?" he asked, speaking of things which he had commissioned me to do for him.

"Yes, sir."

"Thank you," he said; then remained standing, as if he had something else to say; but nothing seeming to occur, he again said, "Thank you," and walked away.

Captain Normanton was a handsome man ; but the workings of an imperious temper spoiled his countenance. I was, however, at that moment in such a state of happiness, that everything was beautiful in my eyes ; and I set about my various duties, wearisome as they often were, as if they had been the chosen joys of my heart. I longed though for my night-watch, that I might, without interruption, think over again the events of the day, hoping for as much happiness in their recollection as I had had at the moment of their occurrence.

That blessed night-watch came at last ; such a night as one often has in those delightful climates—warm, soft, and starry ; and if ever there was a happy being on earth or sea, it was I, as I mounted the companion that night, and came up into the fresh balmy air, preparing for my solitary paces up and down.

Oh ! even now I can look back upon that hour, and bless God who, even as to earthly things, “ giveth such gifts unto men ”—such gifts of pure, warm, heartfelt happiness !—gives them, too, in His most tender love to those who regard Him not ; who, receiving them with eager hands, yet pause not to inquire what heart of love it was which prepared them for them, and chose them with so great a care !

I was not disappointed in thinking that the retrospect of what had passed would bring happiness to my heart. It did so, unspeakably ! When we are the busy actors in a scene where the great interests of our lives are concerned, we are too anxious and nervous—uncertain as we are as to the result—to be able to enjoy the course of the stream which sweeps us on with such whirling rapidity ; and though at last we may be safely landed on a happy shore, and the object of our desire placed within our grasp, yet the struggle and the striving have left our spirits so excited, that though we may feel joy, yet it can hardly claim to be called happiness. But when, in the calm of our hearts, we again float down in memory the same stream of events, we can then with delight revisit each little sunny eddy, bright with a thousand joys, and each nook where we *know* the flowers grow, though we passed them almost unheeded before ; for the blessed result being known, we can afford to linger by the way, and gather all the sweets which lie scattered on its happy course.

Unspeakable indeed was the happiness I enjoyed that night ! Yet, after a time, in recalling all that passed, I began to tremble at what I had done. Not that one misgiving for an instant crossed my mind, as to my own blessed share in the compact into which Mary Sydney and I had entered, but I began to feel,

for the first time, how utterly unworthy I was of her. "What was I that I should think myself fit to be intrusted with her happiness? Whose happiness had I ever sought before in life? What motive of action had I ever had but my own most wilful will?"

These thoughts thronged thickly upon me, and oppressed my mind with a weight I had never experienced before. It was the first time that I had ever really considered that I was a responsible being; and that responsibility, involving, as it now did, the happiness of another, filled me with alarm and self-condemning fears. I had, I thank God, been preserved from much of the vice with which I was but too continually surrounded, but still I was wholly thoughtless, and careless of every principle; and what there might happen to be in me of good, was purely the result of accident,—as people call it. But now I felt the most earnest desire to become worthy of her who loved me; and from my inmost soul I prayed to God to help me, and to teach me what I should be, and what I should do.

It was the first time I had ever *prayed* in my life, though as a child I had been taught to *say* my prayers; and though there was no distinct wish of pleasing God mixed with my desires for improvement, yet I cannot doubt but that my prayer was heard, and that this sense of my utter helplessness was a lesson—the first—I was receiving from His gracious teaching; and if I went below again that night a less light-hearted being than I had mounted on deck, I was certainly a more thoughtful, and, I think, a better one.

CHAPTER IV.

Light as the angel-shapes that bless
An infant's dream !

* * * * *
A soul too, more than half divine ;
Where, through some shades of earthly feeling,
Religion's soften'd glories shine,
Like light through summer foliage stealing ;
Shedding a glow of such mild hue,
So warm, and yet so shadowy too,
As makes the very darkness there
More beautiful than light elsewhere.

Lalla Rookh.

THE next day Captain Normanton went again on shore, and for many succeeding days. There was no sign of our going away, and surmises, and surprises, went on all around. I, of course, neither surmised, nor was surprised ; I knew well the cause of our detention, and did not marvel at it, nor repine !

I can look back to that time with deep thankfulness of heart ; for, from the moment of my ascertaining Miss Sydney's feelings towards me, and also towards Captain Normanton, not one unkind thought respecting him ever crossed my breast. In feeling my great gain, I could but feel his great loss, and from my very soul I felt for him. I took his part whenever I heard him abused, and often got laughed at for my sudden change of tone towards him ; for at first, after the affair of the fire, I was loud in my abuse of him, and did not attempt to conceal my dislike.

All my consideration for him, however, could not prevent my longing impatiently to go on shore again, and I soon obtained leave to do so ; and a very few minutes after my boat had touched land, I found myself again in the little street, and at the door of the little house ; and looking over the way, again saw the little barber in his shop, who, on recognizing me, sprang, as at the first time, across the street at a bound, exclaiming, in answer as it were, to the bell that I had rung,—

“ Sono a casa ; si, si, sono a casa.” (They are at home ; yes, yes, they are at home.)

We exchanged animated salutations,—half of his, however, being sent after me down the dear old damp passage ; for not a

moment did I lose when the door was opened, but rushed in as if the house had been my own, and I was sure of finding myself at home.

Miss Sydney was not in the garden as usual, only her father. He did not see me at first, so I had leisure to observe him more than I had ever chanced to do before. He was thinner than anything I had ever seen, yet without the slightest appearance of ill health. His hair was very gray, but his hawk-like eye and well-cut features fully bore out the account of the past beauty which had helped to win for him the heart of his young bride. He was wholly unlike his child, however, for her beauty was more that of her mother's land. Her slight figure was perfect grace; her soft long-cut eye was fringed with dark lashes, and her pale cheek was less white than her lovely brow, only when feeling sent the blood up to it in a flush of more than mortal beauty.

After studying the old man for a moment, I descended the steps of the terrace; but with far different feelings from those which had agitated me on my first visit there. Then all had been a sort of vague tumult within me, more of expectation than of real feeling; and had Mary Sydney that day disappointed my hope as to what I had pictured her, I should probably have walked up those terrace-steps again with a heart as tranquil and as "fancy-free," as that which I had carried within me when I used to pace up and down in my mother's garden at home. But finding her all, and more than all, my fancy had imaged forth, and loving her as such a being deserved to be loved, I now stood again in that garden, and in the presence of that old man, with feelings like those of a criminal whose hopes and fears were hovering between life and death.

Though I had had misgivings before, yet never till that moment had I fully felt the presumption of what I had done; never fully felt the immeasurable distance between myself—well born certainly, but poor, and thoughtless, and unpolished—and that rich and beautiful girl,—child almost, but with all the refinement and gentle grace of womanhood! How I dreaded meeting the glance of that old man's keen eye; and worlds would I have given to have sunk into the earth ere I was forced to hear the withering words of scorn and rejection which I felt sure he was going to speak. I stood for a moment incapable of seeing or hearing anything distinctly; but I was soon relieved, for, perceiving me, he instantly rose from his chair, and, advancing towards me with a kind countenance, held out his hand, and said he was glad to see me. The revulsion in my feelings was so great, that I could only answer by a sailor's grasp of the hand, which made the old man draw his back with a smile, as

he led the way to the shelter of the trees, and with the polished manner of the *vieille cour*, offered me a chair.

We talked a little on indifferent subjects; but he soon began upon that which was occupying all my thoughts, and spoke with equal good sense and kindness. He told me that his daughter had informed him of what had passed at my last visit, and had asked him for his sanction to our engagement. He said that under ordinary circumstances he should have refused to listen to anything of the kind between "children like us;" but that, bound as he was by ties of the deepest gratitude to me, he could not treat me as he would have done another; that he had, therefore, made all possible inquiries concerning me,—my conduct and character, &c.; and finding that all the accounts he received were, he was pleased to say, in my favour, he had determined to give our attachment a fair trial, and that if our minds remained the same till I was of age,—at which time his daughter would be nearly nineteen,—he would then consent to an engagement between us, which might end in marriage whenever circumstances admitted of it. He then spoke most kindly of what he called his obligations to me, and added, that he had no doubt that the remembrance of them had influenced his daughter also in the answer she had given to my proposal.

I was much hurt at this, and replied, rather indignantly, that if I thought *that*, I should desire instantly to release her from her engagement; for that my love was far too earnest and too true to be satisfied with anything but love in return.

He begged my pardon with a smile, and said he was sorry to have hurt my feelings, which he was far from intending; that he could well imagine that it was pleasanter for me to think that it was for myself, and not for my deeds, that I was accepted, and sincerely trusted that it was so.

"But here she comes," he added, gaily; "so you may ask her herself."

"No," I said hurriedly, lowering my voice; "I need not *ask*, I shall soon *feel* which it is."

Though I knew she was coming, I could not turn to greet her, my mind was so disturbed; and when at last my eye did meet hers, there was so much of trouble in it that, as she told me afterwards, her heart sank within her, thinking that something unpleasant had occurred between me and her father. This gave to her countenance so anxious an expression that I was in a moment reassured; for I felt convinced that mere gratitude could never have produced so much emotion as she showed. A thrill of joy—so quick in their transition are our feelings!—lighted up my countenance into instant brightness,—I felt that it did so, and hers reflecting its expression, she advanced again

towards me,—for in the moment of her terror she had paused with her hand resting for support on a stone vase of flowers, which stood in the midst of the garden.

“Mary,” said her father, “I have spoken to Mr. St. Clair, and have told him the same as I told you: that if, when he comes of age, you are both in the same mind as you are now, and all else concurs to make my consent advisable, I will then give it. Meanwhile, it is not probable that you will meet often, though I shall not deny your doing so, for I think it but right and reasonable that those who are to judge of each other should learn to know each other; but circumstances will probably divide you, Mr. St. Clair having his home upon the waters, and you,—wherever fate may cast your lot and mine.”

He paused, for his voice faltered; his daughter stooped down and pressed her lips to his forehead, murmuring lovingly, “Come what may, never let me leave you, my father!”

She sunk on her knees by his side, and he, throwing his arms round her neck, cried like a child.

At length, raising his head, he held out his hand to me, and said that I must forgive him, for he was a weak old man, shaken in mind and body; that the thought of any change in the fate of his child was trying to him, but that I must not think that his emotion proceeded from any mistrust of me, only from anxiety for her.

I said, I know not what, of “watching over her happiness;” I felt it would be but watching over my own!

Great was my enjoyment that day, and much benefit did I always derive from my conversations with Miss Sydney; for there was a charm in her words which dropped into my heart like dew, and brought forth blossoms of thought and feeling, of whose germ even I had never been conscious before. Not that she then meant to teach, for she was very young, and in the simplicity of her heart knew not that to her a treasure had been committed, unknown to most others; but her thoughts were so purely sweet, her feelings so holy, her mind so elevated, that one imbibed from them health to one's soul, without knowing scarcely how it came, or what had brought it. Her spirits, too, were so light and gay, that trouble vanished from the heart almost at sight of her; she was as “sunshine walking through the earth,” and clearing away its clouds and mists. Yes!

“Hers was life's enjoyment, offering still
The tribute of her happiness to Heaven;”

and her bright gratitude and unyielding faith animated all she did, and gilded every path in life.

Hers was true faith,—actual, simple belief in the word and the goodness of God ; and when she found, as she soon did, that this was a thing unknown to me, how painful was her surprise ! Then, indeed, did she become a teacher, intentionally, of my dark soul ; and though I was the first on whom her loving zeal expended itself, yet it then grew large and wide, till it urged her gentle but courageous spirit in every way to try and conquer souls for Christ.

“*Légitime conquête ! où il y a deux vainqueurs, et où il n’y a point de vaincu !*” (Legitimate conquest ! where there are two conquerors, and where there is no vanquished !)

Never, perhaps, of mere earthly happiness did I enjoy so cloudless a time as then. It was not merely that I was with her whom I loved, but it was the power, new to me, of loving, of living out of the narrow bounds of one’s own poor selfish self. I seemed almost to look about me to find objects to love, so large, though so full, did my heart seem ! To the thought of my mother I turned with an affection I had never even imagined before ; and instead of the almost schoolboy letters I had been used to send her, I now poured forth volumes from out of the full store of my inward heart. I told her, of course, instantly of my conditional engagement, hoping it would meet with her fullest approbation, and, in the joy of my heart, calling upon her to rejoice with me in my blessed prospects. Conditional, indeed, I could not feel it to be ; for, unread in the mysteries of the frail human heart, I never dreamt of love like ours fading away, or changing its object. A blissful, an eternal “*Now*” seemed stamped upon it !

It was a delight even to try and please the old General, towards whom I felt the greatest gratitude ; and though the captious irritability, which was the first quality I had observed in him, continually broke forth in our after-intercourse, yet it was seldom a difficulty to me at that time to bear with it, nor did it fret my temper, when I found it did not vex his child. The first time, indeed, that I heard him speak unkindly, as it seemed, to her, I involuntarily started up, and could have annihilated him ; but her calm countenance undergoing no change, and her manner of answering being only, if possible, more gentle and affectionate than before, I restrained my wrath, and sat down quietly again. But when he was at some distance from us afterwards, I asked her if she did not feel angry when he spoke to her in that way.

“*Angry with my father !*” she replied, in astonishment ; “*no, I have never felt anger towards him in my life. I used to*

feel unhappy sometimes, when I was very young, if he spoke in that way, for I thought he must mean it unkindly; but now I know he does not, and I feel great pity for him when those moods come on him, for they must fret him like illness. When he speaks so before strangers, indeed, I cannot bear it, fearing they should think ill of him, as they cannot know the father he is in reality to me; but I did not feel that just now with you, for I could not think of you as a stranger."

The idea of being thus linked in her mind with herself was inexpressibly delightful to me; and from that hour I tried to think with her, to feel with her, to act with her in all things. But it was, after all, but as a dim shadow, uncertainly following a bright and glorious substance.

CHAPTER V.

The Lord is swift to hear
The solitary sighings of distress;
The comfort of His presence is so near
To such as be in pain and heaviness!

Unpublished Poems.

A FEW visits, I have said, I paid, after that first happy one which had settled my fate, when one day, just as I was about to ask leave to go again on shore, the order was given for sailing. I was, as you may suppose, distracted at the thought of having to go away without seeing Mary again—without being able even to write to her; and with a heavy heart I set about my odious duties. I was thankful, however, to find how far less a degree of irritation now mingled with my feelings, than did in former times, under contradiction, and in blessing her for the benign influence she had over me, I felt that to approach nearer to her perfection was an object worthy of any exertion; and the thought that she would be pleased with me could she see the effort I was making, sweetened that effort so much, that I half forgot my sorrow in the animated use of the new powers which she had called forth within me.

As soon as the bustle of getting under way was over, and I had a moment's leisure, I sat down to write to her. As I did so, and remembered that months—years perhaps—might pass away before we met again, my saddened feelings, which I had

kept down for a time with so strong a hand, rose rebelliously against me; and bitter regrets—the bitterness of a first grief—pressed heavily on my heart. I thought this sudden separation a cruelty, and murmured against the decrees of God. The influence which the thought of Mary had had over me for a time, though salutary, was but of mortal power, and could not long stand against natural feeling; but finding my misery increase as my patience diminished, I was driven to the only source of real peace and strength, and, praying, found that my upward appeal was heard and answered from on high.

Oh! how often have I found it so! “God *waiting* to be gracious!” His

“Winged blessings standing by,
In act to part.”*

To me—unworthy as I then was, and ever must be, of the least of all His mercies—to me, even as of old to him who was called “greatly beloved,” the ministering angel might often have said, “At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come;” for never did I send up a glance, a thought, an inarticulate wish to heaven, but what its golden peace was sent down in answer.

In this case, however, not only was inward peace given, but an immediate relief to my trouble; for scarcely had I become more composed, than the Captain's coxswain came to me with a letter, which he begged my pardon for not having delivered sooner, saying it had been given him by some gentleman's servant just when getting into the boat the last time he came from shore, but that in the bustle of getting off he had quite forgotten it.

I was too much rejoiced at receiving it at all—for I saw the handwriting was a woman's, and felt sure it was Mary's—to be angry at the delay; so dismissing him with a kind nod, I tore my letter open in an instant.

No words can describe my astonishment on reading its commencement. Instead of the sorrowful parting lines I had expected, I found expressions of happiness at the prospect of seeing me again so soon, and being so much with me. In bewilderment I raised my eyes as if to question earth, sea, sky, as to what she could mean; and catching the sound of the rippling waters as they passed rapidly by the ship's side, I sadly felt how little they spoke of near meetings. I then again turned to the letter, fancying she must have been unaware, when she wrote, of my approaching departure. But I soon

* In the hope of disarming criticism, the author acknowledges to great anachronisms in quotations.

found that that was not the case ; and with a surprise, equalled only by the trembling joy that seized me, did I read that Captain Normanton, having met her and her father the day before, and hearing the latter say that he had determined on visiting England the ensuing spring, had offered them a passage on board his ship, which was to take her homeward course about that time.

I could scarcely believe my senses ! *She* was going to England !—going with *me* ! going, too, at a time when, as our ship was to be paid off, I should have perfect liberty to be with her continually ! I could not contain my joy ; I jumped up in an ecstasy, then sat down again, and once more opened and read her letter, with less surprise perhaps, but not less joy, than before.

As I looked up at last, I caught the eye of one of my mess-mates, who had come in without my hearing him, and who had been watching me, he said, for some time with infinite amusement ; for while I held my letter in one hand, I had, it seemed, been gesticulating with the other in a wonderful manner. As soon as he saw he was perceived, he darted forward, and with the agility of a monkey seized my letter, and held it aloft over his head. I rushed upon him, and dragged his arm down with all my strength ; but when just within my reach, he caught the letter in the other hand, and again flourished it on high.

I was furious, but felt the ridicule of such a chase, so gave it up ; though I stamped on the deck, raved at him, and insisted on his instantly returning it to me. But he, continuing his exulting laugh, told me, “ I should never have it till I told him who it was from ; that if I did not tell him quickly, he should proceed to inform himself by the simple process of looking at the signature, and that if it promised any amusement, he should read the epistle aloud, for the benefit of all the juniors in the ship.”

Knowing that he was perfectly capable of executing his threat—being always bent on mischievous fun, though otherwise the best-natured and kindest-hearted fellow in the world—remembering also that it is generally those who guess your secret, not those who know it, who are the ones to betray you—I thought my best way was to cease the contest, and yield with as good a grace as I could ; so telling him, that if he gave me my letter, I would tell him who it was from, I held out my hand for it, and was not not a little rejoiced when I again felt it in my possession.

“ And now,” he said, seating himself close to me, and looking at me with a ludicrous length and solemnity of face, “ my dear fellow ! I am all ear, all impatience ; so begin—begin.”

"I shan't say one word," I replied, "or tell you anything, till you put your face into proper shape again, and sit a little further from me. But seriously, if you wish not to make my keeping my promise most excessively irksome, promise me in your turn, not to repeat a syllable of what I am going to say, and try, will you, not to turn it into ridicule."

"If it is anything really serious, my good fellow, I wouldn't either repeat or ridicule it for the world," he replied, drawing himself a little away, and letting his handsome face become handsome again.

"You are the best fellow in the world," I said; "or I would rather have taken the chance of being knocked on the head in the scuffle, than have promised to tell you a word about it."

He was indeed the "best fellow in the world;" and when I had given him an outline of the case, he entered heart and soul into my feelings; and many a time afterwards did he stand between me and trouble, and help me in a thousand ways.

Not a word, however, of Captain Normanton's liking for Miss Sydney did I breathe. My promise to her could not be forgotten; and even had I not given it, the feeling that I was his successful rival would effectually have sealed my lips. I felt so much for him indeed, that not only could I not have borne to mention the thing myself, but I could not even have endured the idea that others should suspect it. When, therefore, my companion expressed his surprise at the unwonted civility of the offer made to General Sydney and his daughter, I merely said that the acquaintance having been formed under peculiar and distressful circumstances, and the General being an old man, I did not think there was anything very remarkable in it; but that, however that might be, I of course was very glad, though I begged him not to say a word on the subject till Captain Normanton himself should mention it.

On we went, moving majestically before a light breeze, and coasting along Italy's beautiful shores; then round by Sicily, Malta, Greece, &c. Weeks and months passed rapidly by, but still Captain Normanton spoke not a word. Winter—such winter as is known in those delightful climes—was almost past; and as we neared shore occasionally, we could see the fresh green of the early foliage spreading its mantle over the woods and hills. How lovely it was! and, gilded by the light within my heart, it seemed to me lovelier than to any one besides.

At length there was a stir in the ship. The carpenter was put into requisition, and sundry alterations and improvements were made in the Captain's cabin, &c.; and at last, when the

time approached for our return to England, we were ordered to run once more up the Gulf of Genoa, which being so completely out of our course, gave great surprise on board. Still not a word was said of the reason of this proceeding; till as we drew near to Nice, it was at last announced. Great was the surprise expressed,—not so much at the circumstance itself, as at the mystery that had so long enveloped it; and suspicion once awakened, a thousand tributary observations and remembrances came pouring in to swell the flood of conjecture,—all pointing, of course, to the only probable, and in this instance, true solution of the case.

It was insufferable to me to have the subject mentioned in that way; to hear that name bandied about from mouth to mouth, which I could almost have wished should never have been breathed but by “the pure lips of angels only”—to hear it too coupled jestingly with that of another!

For that other too as I have said, I felt deeply. I knew that the whole ship's company thought he was attached to Miss Sydney,—and knew too, that they must all hereafter hear of the failure of his wishes. I felt as if I were wronging him; as if I were the cause of all the contemptuous words which were spoken of him now, and of all the heart-misery which I feared might be his hereafter. I could have done anything for him—endured any treatment at his hands; and if even his voice was heard, I involuntarily started forward, anxious to perform the least of his wishes. Oh! could he have read my heart, how differently perhaps would his own have felt towards me! Could he have known how careful I was of his feelings, he might perhaps have lightened a little the hand which afterwards lay so heavy upon mine!

CHAPTER VI.

I ask no line—no written line,
For thy dear hand to fill,
By which thy absent soul with mine
Might commune still.

Dear are such signs to those who fear
That they can be forgot ;
And I too own them dear, most dear,
Yet need them not.

No signs those faithful instincts need,
By which I feel thee mine ;
And in my own true heart can read
The love of thine.

Unpublished Poems.

At length the day came, so fraught with emotion !

It had been General Sydney's desire that nothing should be said of my engagement to his daughter, till the time arrived when it was to be definitively settled ; so that in the eyes of the world, I had no further claim upon her than that of a common acquaintance, except, perhaps, such as my little service to her might be considered as entitling me to. I knew not, therefore, in what manner to accost her on her arrival ; and when at last I saw her, assisted by Captain Normanton, mounting the ship's side, I longed to rush away, fearful lest I should betray some of the many tumultuous emotions which swelled within me. But I felt rooted to the spot.

I had written to General Sydney several times during our cruise, but had not received a line from him, not knowing where to tell him to direct his letters. It was not needed, however, as far as my reliance on his daughter was concerned, much as I should have delighted in hearing, for no doubt of her constancy could ever have crossed my mind ; and had it ever done so, her glowing and agitated recognition of me, as, on ascending the ladder, she chanced to look up, and caught my eye, would have dispelled it in a moment. I no longer wished to fly, for such a deep peace fell on my heart as completely restored my self-possession.

It was not so with her, however ; and trembling and frightened at appearing among so many strangers, she became confused, and her foot slipping as she stepped on deck, she would

have fallen, had not my hand caught and saved her. She did not at the first moment see to whom she was indebted for this slight service, and was beginning to thank me as a stranger, when perceiving who it was, she suddenly became silent—but in that eloquent silence what was left unsaid?

Captain Normanton, whose arm she was holding, also started forward to save her, and caught sight of her countenance at the moment of her recognizing me. My eye glanced on him, and a look of more mortal agony I never saw. It withered for a moment all my joy; and I felt as if I could have fallen at his feet, and implored his forgiveness for all the ill which I had wrought him. And yet it was not I; for if I had never existed, I feel sure that she would never have liked him, though to see her prefer another must have been misery indeed!

I thought I must speak, so saying a few words, I left them to pursue their way, and went to help the old General. He was very kind, and pressed my hand with great warmth; but as I gave him my arm to steady him against the rolling of the ship, I felt that he was very tremulous, and he seemed more shaken than I had ever seen him before. He told me what a great and painful effort it had been to him to leave Nice, with all its charm of recollections; and that the needful preparations for his removal had very much harassed and wearied him.

When I had conducted him to the door of the cabin, he begged me to come in; but seeing the Captain there, I felt I had better not, so returned on deck.

As soon as I got there, Bruce, the shipmate I have mentioned, took my arm, and walked off with me away from the others.

"Lies the wind in that quarter?" he whispered. "I thought as much, but chose to wait a little before I hazarded my guess. I suspect by this time, however, that it is past guessing-work with any in the ship."

"What do you mean?" I asked, unwilling to corroborate the truth of his suspicions.

"What do I mean, most innocent? Why that our Captain's in love with *your* love, and that you'll have a stout battle to fight for her before you win her,—that's what I mean."

"What makes you think so?"

"*Think* that he is in love with her! I don't think it, I am sure of it; and if I wasn't sure of it, there's his coxswain's sure of it, and Parkins is sure of it, and Smith's sure of it, and Lawson's sure of it, and Saville's sure of it, and ——"

"Well, never mind," I said. But on he went.

"And Booth is sure of it, and Harris is sure of it, and"—raising his voice higher and higher, the more he saw I wanted

to stop him—"Streetfield's sure of it, and Raikes is sure of it, and ——"

"There's one on board, at least, who is not sure of it," I said, when at last he stopped, pretending to be out of breath.

"Is there?" he exclaimed; "then all I can say is, that man's a ——"

"Thank you," I replied, laughing at his implied compliment, and willing he should imagine it was myself I meant, though in fact it was the General, who I knew was wholly ignorant on the subject.

"But now, Bruce," I continued, "pray do not go on in this way. You know my secret and hers,—not that you won it very fairly, either; but you do know it, and I feel sure will keep it. But if you have any regard for the Captain's or for our peace whilst we are here, let matters go on as quietly as possible. Draw the attention of the men and the youngsters off as much as you can, and take no more notice of this foolish idea about the Captain. If a word of it were to reach his ear, you may be sure it would be the worse for us all; and true or false, he would be annoyed beyond measure, and naturally too."

"Oh! I'll be as discreet as possible," he said; "mute as a figure-head, delusive as a dolphin! But now I must tell you a piece of news. She's very beautiful!"

"I am glad you think so," I replied; "though of course you could not think otherwise. Yes, she is beautiful!"

"And rich?"

"I believe so."

"You're a pretty fortunate fellow, I think! I only wish the chance had been mine."

Some contemptuous reply was just on my lips, when looking into his fine face, and knowing what a good fellow he was, I could only exclaim with a smile:

"I am very glad it wasn't; I should have stood but a poor chance after you."

"Well now, that's a very pretty compliment," he said, "very—and very handsome of you to make it; so now I'm your friend for life. Not a very old bird, you see, to be caught by such chaff."

He was indeed a friend to me!—in after-times, oh, how great a friend! But many also were the services he did me during that trying, but happy—torturing, but delightful passage home; not only as to procuring me many a quiet moment with Mary—for which, in his kindness, he was ever on the watch,—but also

in diverting attention from us, and from Captain Normanton also, which last I cared for almost more than the first. Not that it was possible that any part of the affair could remain much of a secret; a ship's crew has too little to divert or interest it, for the arrival on board of such a being as Mary to be a matter of indifference. She could not come on deck but what all eyes were turned on her; and there was not one among us, from the captain to the powder-monkey, who would not have gone bare-headed and barefooted, day or night, to have done her the slightest service.

But still Bruce, from being a general favourite, and one moreover who did not mind using—though always well—the power he felt he had over the others, stood in the gap in a thousand instances. “Of course the Captain must do this,” and “of course he must do that. Wasn't it his own ship? and mustn't he do the honours?” And “of course St. Clair has a right to speak to them;” and “of course he has a right to be with them! Didn't he save their lives?”

This, which I overheard continually, kept the others tolerably quiet; for they none of them liked to come within reach of his contemptuous “of courses.”

CHAPTER VII.

The very pleasure of our earthly pleasures, the very affection of our earthly affections, makes the heart quiver with their touch.—*C. L.*

It was beautiful weather when we set sail on our way homewards; and on the evening of the day of their embarkation, General Sydney and his daughter came upon deck with the Captain, and one or two of the officers whom he had invited to dine with them. I did not like to join them, so contented myself with walking occasionally near enough to catch Mary's eye, and once or twice to hazard a whispered word if the Captain was not near.

She was standing at one time looking towards the receding shores of her native land, and I saw that she was crying. It was very natural, but I could not bear her tears. She did not see that I was near; and as the others were talking together on the quarter-deck, I quietly breathed her name. She started, and seeing me, strove to hide her tears.

"You are grieved to leave your own country," I whispered; "but you are going to mine."

"And mine, too," she replied.

Then seeing her father coming towards us with rather unsteady steps, she went to meet him, and, taking his arm, she led him to where I was standing, and under his sanction, we stayed and talked together for some minutes; but seeing the Captain, who had been examining something through his glass, turn round to look for them, I took my leave, dreading alike to incur his displeasure and to wound his feelings.

The ship made but little way for several days, for there was scarcely a breath of wind; and during that time I had many moments of great enjoyment. Mary remained but little below, frequently coming up with her father, and walking about, induced by one or other of the officers to examine different parts of the ship. For such occasions, when the Captain was not there, Bruce was ever on the watch,—he being, in fact, among the foremost in creating them; and if I was not on deck when they occurred, he somehow or other always contrived to let me know, so that I had many opportunities for conversation with Mary,—broken and interrupted indeed, but still, as may be imagined, delightful to me.

As she had her pianoforte on board, she agreed, when she was not on deck, to carry on a little intercourse with me through the medium of music, in her talent for which delightful art, as well as for painting and many other accomplishments, her Italian origin showed itself very distinctly. I had heard her sing many beautiful things, and having got from her a list of them, she let me select such as I wished her to sing each day; and as I heard her soft but powerful voice rising from beneath, or running through the cabins between the decks, I felt that she was speaking to me,—her spirit with mine, as mine was with hers,—and though shut from each other's sight, we were together in heart.

One evening we were on deck, when the sun had given place to the light of the glorious moon, which, though not then at the full, yet completely justified the well-known boast of the Neapolitan ambassador to one of our ministers: "*La lune du roi mon maître vaut bien votre soleil*" (the moon of the king my master is well worth your sun); and as its yellow beams lay on the waters at the ship's side, broken into myriads of sparkles, it seemed as if I had never thought it beautiful before.

We were making Port Mahon, and hove to there. The whole

thing was so lovely!—the bright heavens, the reflection of the lights from the shore, and the calm outline of the isle itself, as it

“Bask'd in the night-beam beauteously,
And the blue waters slept in smiles!”

I had been invited by the Captain to dinner that day; and when we went up afterwards on deck, he was happily busy giving some orders elsewhere.

It was generally at such quiet times as these that the beauty of Mary's mind showed itself the most delightfully; but this evening she seemed buried in her own thoughts. In general, if she spoke to me of the things of God, I could scarcely answer her a word; but now as the beauty of that scene, and the joy of having her to look on it with me, pressed on my heart almost to sadness, I felt a longing to hear her speak of what alone could take that aching pain away. Her holy feelings had always soothed me; and truly could I have said to her at such times, in the words of another: “Quand vous parlez, c'est comme de la musique!”—(When you speak, it is like music!) I listened for her to speak, but she was silent then.

At last, weighed down by the oppression of my overfull heart, I dropped my head on my arms as they rested against the ship's side, and murmured forth:

“Speak to me of God, Mary.”

She did not answer me for a moment, save by laying her trembling hand on my arm; but then she said:

“He is speaking to you Himself, Wilfred.”

“But He has spoken to me so often by you, Mary! Let Him do so again now, for my heart is heavy!”

“Why should it be so?”

“I don't know, unless it is that I have more happiness than I deserve, or know how to be grateful for.”

“Perhaps it is because it is only the happiness of this world. Join to it the brighter thought of God's heaven, and it will not oppress your heart, I think. I am so sorry that it does, for I have been so very happy!”

“Do you always think of God, when you are happy, Mary?”

“I don't know; but I always feel that the joys of life are foretastes of what the joys of heaven must be.”

“Yours is a happy life then! And why should not mine be so too? Why, when I have everything to make me happy—happier than ever I was in my life before—should I feel so—almost miserable?”

“I do not know, unless, as I said before, it is because it is this world's happiness only. *That* we know must perish and pass away, so it has sadness often with it; but God's joys increase

till they are perfect. It is His love which gives us all good things; and that thought makes them doubly dear. In loving you, Wilfred, my heart perpetually springs up to God with a love I never felt before, because he has made me so happy."

My heart was full—full of her sweet words, and somewhat too of the love of God, which seemed at that moment to mingle itself with my exceeding love for her. I raised my head and looked at her, and the load passed away from my heart.

"I, too, will bless God for His gifts," I said; "for who has such cause as I? It is strange He should give such blessings to me, who never in my life thought of Him till you made me do so."

"God did that Himself, Wilfred, not I."

"You seem always to have Him in your thoughts, Mary."

"I wish I had," she exclaimed. "Is it not delightful to have one's heart in heaven, and heaven in one's heart?"

"Did you always feel these things as you do now?"

"I never felt otherwise; though of course, in growing older, I feel and learn continually more. But my mother taught me to think of them when I could think at all, so I cannot trace their first beginnings in my heart."

"Your mother! was she not a Roman Catholic?"

"When she married, yes; but when they went to Nice, out of love to my father she would go with him to church as well as to her own service, and Nice has generally been blessed with good English ministers. One of these was the means of her conversion."

"By showing her the errors of her own faith?"

"No; I don't think he ever tried to do that—at least, not unless she asked him; but he showed her the truth, and then of course the error fell away. I have heard him say—for he lived long there—that there was but little use in emptying a mind of an error unless you put a truth in its place; he thought that that was what made so many Roman Catholics become infidels. Either from their own minds, or the arguments of others, they saw what was not true in their faith; and then knowing nothing better, they learned to disbelieve everything. He used to say that was the meaning of the parable about the evil spirit going out of a house and leaving it empty—you know which I mean."

"Yes, when more evil spirits came in, and the last state of that man was worse than the first."

"Yes, for he said, any faith, any belief in Christ, however imperfect, was better than none—a wholesomer state for the mind, and might lead to the truth. It signified little, he used to say, by what name men perished, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic—and all must do so, whose hearts were not converted

—turned quite to God; so he spoke to all alike, and God blessed him greatly to those of both religions. He spoke so strongly, but so kindly—all loved him.”

“And your father, Mary, does he feel with you? Surely not.”

She looked pained as she said:

“I have hoped so. He went in everything with my mother; but since then I can hardly say, though still I think he wishes for the truth. And I have prayed so much for him, and I can see no reason why God should not answer my prayers. He is not all that my mother was; yet to him I owe many good thoughts, and I love to feel that I do so. What happiness it will be when I meet my sweet mother in heaven, and am able to thank her for all she has done for me—and him too. Is it not Newton who says: ‘The Christian will look back throughout eternity with interest and delight on the steps and means of his conversion.’ ‘My father told me this—my mother told me that.’ ‘Such an event was sanctified to me—in such a place God visited my soul.’ I have often thought of that. I like to feel that heaven is a continuation of earth, and not a quite fresh, new thing; that seems so cold to the heart.”

“I suppose it is the idea that it was an end of all things here, that has always made the thought of death such a shuddering thing to me. To leave all I have loved, to forget it, to lose sight of this beautiful world, with all its pleasant things and blessed memories, this chills my very heart to think of; and I fear I do not as yet value what I shall go to, sufficiently to make me part from what I shall leave, without a pang.”

“It is not parting, Wilfred, it is not parting; it is getting more in addition. Heaven cannot be as an inclosed garden, out of which we are not to move. All the universe will be ours to range in and enjoy; and why should we suppose that earth alone—our own dear, dear earth!—should be the only spot from which we are to be exiled? When the ‘outgoings of the morning and the evening praise God,’ why should we not be there, even as now our voices may be allowed perhaps to join the fervent, loving song of those already before the throne? The church of Christ is all one, Wilfred, whether journeying here, or at home there.”

“Yours is the most cheerful view I have ever heard taken of it,” I said. “Generally, people speak of death, as if it were the darkest, dreariest thing in creation, or at best, a long, dreamless sleep before being admitted to heaven; and that long sleep sounds so chilly.”

“These bodies sleep, but not we—we are with God, and have celestial bodies.”

"But it says our bodies are to be raised again, and we to inhabit them again."

"I know it is said so, and so therefore it must be; but St. Paul speaks of being 'unclothed' of our present bodies, and immediately 'clothed upon' by heavenly ones. And Moses and Elias had bodies—visible appearances of some kind, or the apostles could not have seen, and recognized them, when with our Lord."

"That recognizing them, how wonderful! Men, whom they had never seen!"

"The Almighty Spirit of course told them who they were. And think of us, Wilfred—you and I, poor, frail things as we seem in comparison—think of our seeing, and conversing with those holy beings. Oh! what are we, that we should be admitted among such? admitted—more than all—to see God 'face to face!' Oh, Wilfred! does not the very thought thrill through the heart and soul?"

"I don't know what it makes me feel—it seems overpowering—so great, so high! And then that we can sin against God, and be vexed by passing things!"

At that moment a step approached—it was Captain Normanton's; and what a comment on what I had just been saying, was the revulsion of feeling caused by his presence! How, in a moment, was heaven, with all its heavenly things, expelled from my mind, and earth's poor troubles and vexing irritations again established there. Mary, too, seemed to participate somewhat in my feelings, for she moved a little from me, and spoke to her father, who was sitting near.

The moon had now quite disappeared, but her hidden lamp still shed a soft and misty light around the spot where she had sunk.

"Are you not afraid of staying out so late, Miss Sydney?" said Captain Normanton, in a voice which showed he was trying to restrain some unpleasant feeling.

"It has been so very warm," she replied, "that I thought there was no danger; but perhaps it is getting rather late."

"But as you are here, perhaps you will not mind staying a little longer, as I have been detained from you so long," he said, as he saw her draw her shawl around her, and seemed preparing to depart.

"I—do not mind," she answered, seeming to hesitate between her fear of encouraging, and her fear of offending him; "but it does I think get a little cold."

"Will you have another shawl? Mr. St. Clair I am sure will be good enough to ask for one."

"Certainly, sir," I replied, amused at his authoritative mode of getting his own way, whether she wished it or not.

I ran down, and soon reappeared with a shawl, which I was holding out for her to put on, when, taking it from me, he said, rather quickly—

“Thank you. Good night.”

I was excessively annoyed; but I went to take leave of General Sydney, and then wished Mary good night. She held out her hand to me; and even by that faint light, I could see the sweetness of her look, as if she wished to make up to me for any pain I might have to bear on her account.

An impatient gesture from Captain Normanton prevented my lingering as I would fain have done; and full of wrath, yet with the blessed consciousness of being beloved, I withdrew to my hammock, and had not been there long, ere to my malicious satisfaction I heard Mary's light footstep enter her cabin.

CHAPTER VIII.

Human love can do no more than this,—sacrifice all for what it loves, and leave the issues to a higher power.—ELLEN PICKERING.

SOBRY as I was for Captain Normanton, a new source of anxiety soon arose, infinitely more painful to me. Bruce had been, as I have said, most kind in procuring for me opportunities of being with Mary, and at first he would often be with us, when we went about the ship, and his spirits being as high as mine, we were certainly a most joyous party. But after a time, though ever faithful in summoning me, he would always make some excuse for absenting himself. Selfishly full of my own happiness, I had not noticed this, till Mary said to me one day—

“Why does not Mr. Bruce ever come with us now? I miss his joyous laugh, and like him so much better than any of the others.”

“I didn't observe that he was not with us,” I answered, as a slight feeling of jealousy passed my mind—for, as I have told you, my wayward temper often troubled her. “His absence seems to make more impression on you than on me.”

She smiled; but her smile had so much of pain mingled with it, that I was sorely ashamed of myself.

“I will go and see for him,” I said.

She smiled again, and this time there was no pain in her sweet look; and wondering that she could be so kind to one so

unworthy of her love, yet full of happiness, I bounded along the deck, and in a moment had dived down into the lower regions.

I found Bruce alone in the berth, sitting with his elbows on his knees and his face buried in his hands.

"Bruce," I cried, "what are you doing here? Why don't you come up to us?"

He had looked up sideways on hearing my step, but then relapsed into his former attitude. He made no answer.

"Why don't you come up?" I repeated.

Still no answer.

"Bruce," I said in astonishment, "what is the matter with you?" And I went up and laid my hand on his shoulder.

"Go away, can't you," he said, shaking my hand off, yet without raising his head.

"Yes, I can," I replied; "but I don't choose to go till you come with me."

"Then you may stay," he growled; "for I am not coming."

"But we want you."

"Not a bit of it!"

"We do, I tell you. Miss Sydney sent me to say she wanted you."

"Did she?" And he raised his head suddenly; then dropping it again, murmured—"No, she didn't."

"She did, I tell you!"

"She didn't, I tell you!"

"I tell you she did! Come, don't be obstinate, and so very lazy; get up, and come. She wants to hear your joyous laugh again, she says."

"I dare say she does," he replied, with a little taunt in his tone; "but I'm not going to laugh for hers or anybody's amusement. So you may say I shan't come, or *can't* come; I suppose that would be civillest."

"Why can't you come? What's the matter with you?"

"My grandfather's dead."

"But your grandfather's been dead these ten years; so that won't do."

"I didn't say when he died, I only said he was dead—and so he is."

"Bruce, are you gone mad?"

"I don't know, and I don't care much," he replied; his pretended crossness giving place to a tone of real sadness.

The pang that shot through me, as a suspicion of the truth all of a sudden flashed on my mind, I cannot describe. If there was a being in the world I loved, next to Mary, it was Bruce; if there was one, in the way of whose happiness I would not for

worlds have stood, it was he. Yet here, all of a sudden, I found myself, as I thought, between him and his best wishes—him and his love! I stood looking at him in consternation for a minute; then, incapable of saying another word, I left the berth.

I felt my mind in such disorder that I could not immediately return on deck; and while I was lingering below, I heard Mary's voice in conversation with the Captain, so knew it was in vain for me to go up then, and for once in my life I was glad of an excuse for not joining her.

I sat down at the foot of the companion, and tried to arrange my thoughts. I was always rather given to day-dreams; things which, if often of dangerous tendency, are not always without their use—at least I have found it so. In my reveries I had often liked to fancy myself in such and such situations, and to think what would be my feelings and course of action under them. Amongst other things I had tried to fancy what I should do if ever I found Mary liking any one better than me, or if I saw any one liking her, whom I thought more worthy of her; and in both cases I had imagined myself acting the most magnanimous part, and sacrificing my own happiness to promote theirs.

And now I really found myself in such a case. I had not the smallest doubt but that Bruce had fallen in love with her; and no presumption of self-complacency could make me but acknowledge that he was infinitely my superior in many ways, and infinitely more worthy of her affection. What then should I do? Should I conceal his love from her? Or should I tell her of it, and offer to give up my own claim, if she thought she could like him best?

But how could I give her up? How even bear to run the chance of doing so? The thought seemed to drive me mad! Yet where then was all the splendid generosity with which I had always determined to act? Was the first trial to overthrow it?

I could not endure that thought; and in a transport of self-devotion I rushed back to the berth where I had left Bruce, determined to ascertain whether my suspicions were, or were not, correct, and if they were, instantly to tell Mary, and give her her perfect freedom.

Had I allowed myself a moment's pause, I do not think I could have done it; and perhaps there was, after all, more of chivalry than of sound sense in it altogether. But be that as it may, in I went, and found Bruce sitting exactly as I had left him.

"Bruce," I said, almost before I had shut the door, "will you treat me as a friend, and answer me one question?"

"That is as it may be," he replied, raising his head, and stretching himself with a rather affected vehemence, as if he wished to deceive me into the belief that he had merely been idle or sleepy; "a question is an easy thing for such a lively fellow as you to ask, but an answer is not always so easy for an idle dog like me to give."

"Don't joke, Bruce!" I cried; "for I really want to speak to you. I am sure you are not happy. We've always been friends—more so than any in the ship—and I can't be happy while I see you are not so."

"Why should you suppose I am not so?" he replied, getting up, and brushing some piece of imaginary dust from his trousers.

"I'm sure of it," I said; "and I fear greatly that I am the cause."

"You?" he said, stopping short in his operations for a moment, and then resuming them with redoubled energy.

"Yes, I feel sure that it is I who cause your unhappiness, and the thought of that makes me miserable. Now do sit down and let me speak to you quietly while I can."

He sat down, and again resumed his old attitude, but said nothing. I took his silence as encouragement, so went on.

"*You* know, and none but you," I began, "that Miss Sydney is engaged to me, conditionally only indeed, as far as formality goes, though an engagement of the heart I fully believe it to be on both sides now. But I was hasty in speaking to her, and she is young, and hasn't seen many people; and before the time comes for our being quite—for everything to be settled, she might, you know—perhaps, see somebody she might like better than me—who might deserve her better, and who might like her—not better—but as well as I do, and I only wish to say," and I hurried on as if I feared dying before I could get it out, "that if that ever were so, I should not wish to stand in their way—I should wish her to be happy in her own way."

"And why do you wish to tell me this, in particular?" said Bruce, without altering his attitude, though his voice trembled as he spoke.

"Because you are the only person in the world that I know of, who, if he did love her, could love her, I think, as well as I do, and deserve her better; and because I think you *do* love her." And I felt as if I must have dropped dead when I ceased speaking.

"I once read of a man," said Bruce, still leaning down, "in some review it was—whose horrid hatred to another was so great, that though he meant to kill him, he would not do so, till he saw him in the act of committing a murder, which he himself

had worked him up to, in order that he might be at the acme of his enormities at the moment that his atrocious soul was hurled into perdition. Now, being your friend, St. Clair, if I had intended to murder you, I would have waited till you had uttered the words you have just spoken—the brightest, and best that ever fell from mortal lips!”

He raised his head as he spoke, and grasped my hand, while his features gleamed with his high feeling, though they quivered with emotion.

The tears sprang into my eyes as I returned his grasp, for I was overcome by his words, and the great effort I had made,—though I felt that he estimated my action far above its due praise.

“There is nothing wonderful in what I have done,” I began, after a few moments; “nothing but what you, Bruce, would have done in my place.”

“I am not so sure of that,” he replied, more lightly; “I am not sure that I shouldn’t have followed the less generous, but perhaps more sensible course,” and he smiled kindly, “of allowing my friend to keep his love to himself, and himself out of the way.”

“Well,” I said, “it might have been the more sensible course perhaps, but somehow, I could not have been happy in pursuing it: What should I have felt, if in after-times, I saw I did not suit Miss Sydney as she expected, or make her as happy as I should wish, and then remember that, but for me, she might have loved, and married you, who always make every one happy about you?”

“Why—I don’t know,” he replied; “it would have been painful to be sure; but, however, as Miss Sydney does love you, and doesn’t love me, she may be happy with you, but wouldn’t with me, so that settles the matter as far as she is concerned; and for myself, why I must do the best I can, since I have chosen to be such an incomparable idiot as to fall in love with a girl who I knew was in love with another. I only wonder, that instead of making these romantic offers, you haven’t given me my choice of ‘slugs in a sawpit,’ or ‘hatchets in a cellar;’ or snugly consigned me, like some poor Bosphorian heroine to expiate my sins in the cool grottos of Father Ocean’s pleasure-garden. I, spite of right, and might—for I shouldn’t like to come to a tussle with you—have often longed to pitch *you* over the chains—that I can tell you—when I have seen you, where I would have given worlds to have been myself—fool that I am!”

Forgetful of the mortal agony his success would have given me, I again urged his trying at least, his chance.

“What! and throw you over!” he exclaimed. “Nenni,

seigneur, vous remercie; honneur vaut bien maint amour" (No, no, seigneur, I thank you; honour is worth much love). Remember what Landor says: 'He who is inspired by love in a great degree, is inspired by honour in a greater;' and I trust it will ever be so with me."

"But for *her* sake!" I madly continued; "give *her* the option—let *her* judge. I told you at first that I shouldn't have liked you to have had my chance, for I knew that I should have had none afterwards myself; and even now she seems to like you so much, that if she knew that you loved her——"

"She never shall," he exclaimed vehemently, starting up; "I'll blow my brains out first."

"Suppose I chose to tell her."

"Do so if you dare!" he said, furiously, seizing me by the collar, as if purposing to shake the life out of me.

"Come, come," I said, half angry, half laughing, laying my hands on his shoulders, "be quiet, will you, and be reasonable for once in your life. You know I cannot wish to lose her, no! the thought is dreadful!" And I shook off his hands, and turned away in great agitation, striving to quell the storm of feeling which rose within me, as for the first time I really *felt* what the subject of our controversy was.

"It *is* dreadful!" I heard him murmur, as again he sat down, and resumed the attitude of despondency which seemed almost to have become habitual to him.

"Yes! dreadful to one of us it must be," I continued. "The question therefore is, or ought to be, what will be most for *her* happiness; for if you love—as I believe you, Bruce, are capable of doing—you must know that true love seeks the happiness of its object, and not its own selfish pleasure."

"I know it—I know it," he replied, hurriedly.

"Then ought we not to give her the option?"

"Certainly not," he replied again, quickly; "for even granting—which I do not grant—that I were likely to make her happier than you, still she is pledged to you; and if she is the being whose idea I love, she would never be happy under a consciousness of having acted ill by you, or any one. No, St. Clair! leave her with the best happiness—a clear fame, and pure conscience, and let me take my chance. I have been a fool—I have fallen into the snare with my eyes open, and I deserve to suffer for my pains. And as for you—if I do sometimes—and I *do*—long to pitch you, as I said, over the chains—yet you are the dearest friend I have on earth."

"You are a generous fellow to speak so to a rival," I said.

"I don't call you a rival," he replied, a little haughtily. "It is not as if we had entered the lists together, and you had cloven

crest and helm, and made me bite the dust,—then I might have felt a little sore ;” and his look and tone showed that he would not in truth well have borne that. “ But now it is no such thing. I have never appeared in the field ; I’ve only taken a look at her, who is the priceless prize, and suffered for it—that’s all ! But now I’m keeping you down here, when you ought to be up there with her.”

“ No ; when I went out just now, I heard our Captain talking to her, so you know it would be useless my going.”

“ You haven’t offered to give her up to *him*, have you, on the score of his happiness-giving propensities ?” he said, as one of his old, half contemptuous, half playful smiles crossed for a moment his expressive face. “ But I’m really heartily sorry,” he added, “ for having wasted all your time by my stupid folly.”

“ Anything but wasted,” I replied ; “ for no time is so well spent as that which shows us the deep riches of a noble heart, and turns a liking into a friendship for life.”

“ If you’ve found silver, I’m sure I’ve found gold,” he replied ; “ so if you are satisfied, I am.”

How drossy was the “ gold ” he thought he had found, God, and my own heart, only knew.

CHAPTER IX.

The pause of anxious fear, awaiting soon
The dimly-vision’d object of its dread ;
While the hush’d bosom fears to pant or sob,
And the heart dares not throb.

Unpublished Poems.

FROM the day we had that conversation, I saw that Bruce’s feelings acquired greater and greater power over him—as is generally the case when once a thing is spoken of ; and I saw, too, that Mary was aware of it. I perceived this the day after I had spoken to him.

He had told me she was on deck,—and how it went to my heart, when I thought what it must have cost him to do so !—and hurriedly finishing what I was doing below, I ran up, and joined her and her father, just as they were passing him. She stopped to speak to him, asking him some simple question. He became pale, then crimson, and stammered out something of an answer, while I turned away, thinking that the consciousness

that I was witness to his confusion, was partly the cause of it, or at least increased it. In doing so, I caught the expression of Mary's countenance. She seemed wonderstruck as she looked at him; then a deep suffusion covered her whole face, and her manner too became agitated.

What a moment that was for me! Millions of agonies crushed into one point! I felt dizzy, and leaving her side, went and leaned against one of the masts. I could not look at either of them; yet could not let them out of my sight. That Mary had read Bruce's feelings I felt sure; and what might not be the effect upon her? I felt suffocating, I could not breathe. Hitherto I had had no rival but Captain Normanton, and I knew from the first that she disliked him; but now, here was one so made to please, so winning, so full of feeling, so good!—would she not regret that she had so easily given way to my wishes—that she had so hastily pledged herself to me, when she saw that he loved her? Might she not even now involuntarily be led to love him, and find too late, that her feeling for me was but a delusion—a dream, which could satisfy her awakened heart no longer? Ah! the agony of that thought!

But what if it should be so? Was not that the very thing I had contemplated in idea but the day before? Was not the likelihood of her preferring him the very thing which had weighed on my conscience with such overpowering force, and caused me to speak to Bruce? What then made so great a difference between yesterday and to-day? Wherein did it lie? Alas! between the ideal and the real; between the resolve and the performance.

Oh! weakness of human nature, how great art thou! Oh! strength of Divine grace, how greater still! In a moment there flashed across my mind, the memory of the first prayer which I had ever offered up to God—offered months ago, near that very spot—the prayer that I might become worthy of Mary's love. As the thought of it darted through my heart, it became again a prayer; and again peace, strength, and courage descended on my soul.

“One prayer! what mercy taught us prayer!”

I left the place where I had been standing, and advanced to where Mary and General Sydney were speaking to some of the men, Mary having, as I had dimly seen, soon parted from Bruce, who had gone below. She coloured deeply as she met my eye, and turned her head as if to examine something near. I stood by her, but could not speak, so wild a tumult had again returned upon my heart. I tried to do so, that by a word or look in answer, I might judge of what I had to hope or fear; but, as is

constantly the case, the more I sought for words, the less could I force them from my lips.

To my great relief, however, General Sydney soon spoke to me. The necessity of answering seemed to break the spell which had lain on me so painfully; and at the sound of my voice, Mary looked up with a smile so re-assuring—conscious, indeed, yet so sweet, so confiding—that I could have fallen at her feet, and implored her forgiveness for having for a moment mistrusted her constancy and truth.

All was in an instant right between us, and in silent happiness we walked up and down the deck. Both were conscious of possessing a secret, but the time and opportunity were not such as to enable us to enter on it. Both felt, too, in the midst of our own happiness, a deep sorrow for the noble heart whose feelings at that moment were of so different a hue.

When I went below again, I found Bruce with several of our messmates, seemingly absorbed in a volume of Lord Byron. I said not a word, nor did he, till the others, one by one, had walked away; then, throwing down his book with a considerable noise, he started up, and said, with a nervous attempt at a laugh,—

“I’m a pretty keeper of a secret, St. Clair, am I not?”

“Not very,” I replied. “But, to say truth, I shouldn’t have thought your feelings very strong, if you could have kept them from her knowledge.”

“But do you really think she observed anything?” he asked, with some confusion.

“I’m sure she observed something,” I replied.

“I am such a fool!” he exclaimed; “such an insufferable, unmitigable fool!”

“Well, never mind,” I said; “there was no one to observe you but her and me, for the old General sees nothing. I knew it before; and for her, I don’t think you need fear death from her hands.”

He was silent a minute; then, turning his back to me, he said, in a nervous voice,—

“If ever she mentions the subject, do you mind telling me what she says?”

“That depends,” I replied; “if I feel that I can, and ought, I certainly will—even—should it be more encouraging than I might like.”

“You’re a good fellow!” he said, still without looking towards me; “but there’s no fear of that. But don’t you begin on the subject—remember that: give me a last chance of escaping disgrace.

"Disgrace!—where's the disgrace?"

"None to you, I grant; success alters a case mightily. But no man, St. Clair, depend upon it, likes to have it known that he loves in vain."

"But with Mary and me, Bruce, you know that such knowledge would only enhance our regard for you."

"By adding pity to it, I suppose. I hate your pity!"

"But, as you said yourself, it is not as if you and I had entered the lists together, and I had won the prize from you. She was vowed mine before she ever saw you. Don't, my dear fellow!" I continued, "don't let hard thoughts spring up in your mind towards me, or her; it would be a great misery to all if you did."

"No, no, St. Clair," he said, as, turning round, he grasped my hand, "I'll not do that; I owe you both too much—far too much!"

CHAPTER X.

Then love your gracious Father, child of man!
Strive to perform His will, not that you fear,
But that you love. Love has a willing heart;
Fear is the bond of slaves—and perfect Love
Casteth out fear.

TEGNER (*Békhune's Translation*).

FREE as our intercourse was together, it was impossible but that the subject of Bruce's attachment should soon be mentioned between Mary and me, though how it occurred I can scarcely remember.

"I am very grieved about it," she said one day. "Oh that my father would but let me tell that I am engaged to you! it would be so much, much better; then this would never have been."

"Bruce knew that we were engaged," I said. And I told her how that had happened, adding, "Had he not known it, why should he have kept out of your way?"

"But, knowing it, how could he let himself——"

"How, indeed! unless he could not help it;" and I smiled as, looking at her, I felt how natural it was.

"I have felt much about Captain Normanton," she said; "but this is far sadder to me, for *he* should be loved so much!"

"You think so, Mary?" I said, a blackness gathering at my

heart. "Tell me, then, if you had not been engaged to me, could you have loved him?"

"If I had not loved you," she replied, lifting her dark expressive eyes to mine with calm confidence and affection, "I could have loved him, I think, very much; but that makes all the difference."

"But if you saw much of him, and always found him what you now think him, do you feel as if you could love him—better than me?"

"I don't think I could," she answered; adding, with a smile, "and I don't mean to try. But I see fully, and feel deeply, your motive in asking me; and I shall never forget, Wilfred, that you were willing to sacrifice yourself for me. I know it is not want of love, but great love, which makes you willing to give up all your happiness for mine."

"It is," I replied; "and I thank God, from the bottom of my heart, that I can now love you, and see you love me, in peace. For Bruce, however, I feel very much, and wish heartily we were on shore, that he might leave a place so trying to him."

"If you feel for him—as I know you do—and wish to do him good, you have much in your power that you might do."

"What?"

"I have often grieved in thinking of him, that so little of godly feeling seemed mixed with his many delightful qualities; and if you could but lead his mind to the knowledge and love of Him 'whom to know is life, and to love is bliss,' you would be making up to him a million-fold for any passing sorrow of this passing life which we might have given him. Do try, dear Wilfred! Lead him to see the lost state of his soul, and——"

"Lost state of his soul!" I exclaimed, indignantly: "what can make you use such an expression with regard to him? Of all creatures in existence, next to yourself, I am sure that he is most certain of heaven. Who is there like him—so generous, so frank, so warm-hearted? If he be lost, who can deserve to be saved?"

"None, certainly," she replied; "for does not 'being saved' infer that there is something to be saved from—namely, the punishment due to our sins? We cannot, then, *deserve* punishment, and yet *deserve* to be saved from it!"

"No, certainly," I replied, "I did not think of that; for one so often hears the expressions of 'deserving heaven,' and 'meriting salvation,' that the idea of its being impossible—which it is—never struck me. But still, how can you call Bruce 'lost?' Are not his good qualities a proof that he is a child of God?"

"Not quite," she replied, gently. "Some author says, 'A

man may obey every law of God, without, nevertheless, obeying God; for He has told us to do all things from love to Him. And do you think that it is love to God which makes Mr. Bruce's feelings so generous and good? Or is not merely that his natural disposition is delightful?"

"But if it is even only that, it is God who has given him that disposition."

"Yes; but if he act merely to please himself, and not to please God, is not that a proof that he is not God's child? Did you ever read any of Chalmers' works?"

"Never."

"They are so beautiful! He says in one of them: 'That which makes the moralities of this world nothing but "splendid sin," is that there is nothing of God in them.'"

"A curious expression! Why should he call them 'sin?'"

"Because, as he says, 'there is nothing of God in them,'—for surely that is the essence of sin. If you were the most devoted of sons, yet thought not of God, does that not prove that you would do for the object of an earthly affection what you would not do for God? And is not that sin?—though, being beautiful outwardly, it may be called—as Augustine called it first, and afterwards Chalmers—'splendid sin?' Oh, dear Wilfred! it is the heart's love to God which alone proves us to be His children—nothing else; and that is a feeling that brings all joy."

"Well, then, tell me what I can do for Bruce—for, truth to say, I do not think he has any love to God, such as you describe. I have often heard him say light things on the subject, and, indeed, so have we all; for you have no notion what a set of beings we are in general when together."

"Have you ever spoken lightly of those things?"

"I have, Mary, but never can again, for I never again can feel lightly; and it is from that that all the evil comes."

"I did not think you could ever have done so," she murmured in a low voice.

"I wish from my soul I never had; but, as I told you, you really have no idea of what creatures like us are in general. I can't bear to think of it now; though I will say for Bruce and myself, we are not like many of them, only so very careless and thoughtless! But the worse I have been, Mary, the more ought you to rejoice in having done me good,—for you have done me much good, and will, I trust, do me a thousand times more. Yes," I added, after a pause, "you are right in wishing to do that poor fellow good; for if the happy need God, how much more the unhappy! What shall I do for him, then?"

"Pray first, for God to open his heart, and then speak—what

you feel. What comes from the heart, goes to the heart. He reads the Bible, does he not?"

"Never."

"Nor prays?"

"I believe not. He said one day 'he could not fancy himself praying.'"

She was silent.

"I see you think very ill of us," I said, after a time.

"Not of you, Wilfred;—for surely you pray and read the word of God."

I was silent now in my turn; for conscience told me I had been as neglectful as Bruce in these matters. I saw the grief that shaded her eyes, and it fell like lead upon my heart. Never had a real sense of sin struck my soul till that moment; and the effect which the knowledge of it produced on the pure being before me, made me feel in some degree what I must appear before the All-pure himself.

"Wilfred," she said, after a little while, "it was sinful and careless in me, not to have found out what your feelings were, before I promised to be your wife; but I did not think you were one who could ever have forgotten to ask the protection of Him who alone can protect,—or have neglected to use the mighty privilege of seeking peace and joy from the blessed word of God. What would you think, if you had written me a letter full of kindness and unbounded love, relating sufferings you had endured for me,—benefits you had procured me, asking me too, to do such and such things for my own happiness, and your love's sake,—and I refused, or neglected to read your letter, throwing it aside with other forgotten things? Would you think highly of my love—my devotion to you? Surely not! And is not the Bible a letter written to each of us, by our heavenly Father's hand, telling us that He 'wills not that any should perish,' and that 'He so loved us as to send His Son to die for us,' and speaking so many, many words of peace and joy? And have you neglected it?—Yes! I ought to have known your feelings before I pledged my faith to you; but yet I trust—I pray that God will not visit my carelessness upon me, but will grant me the desire of my soul, the agony of my heart—and that you may be saved."

"You really think I may, Mary," I said, my whole heart melted within me by the gentle sorrow yet encouragement of her tone and words; "*that* hope then shall be ever before me, and I will pray and try to enjoy fully the privilege of having God to go to as a friend at all times. I *have* found it, and wonder I have not sought it oftener. His word too, I will read. But tell me where to begin, for I am so ignorant!"

"Read then, dear Wilfred, will you, to-night, the fourteenth chapter of St. John. I think always that if any one begins there, they cannot stop, or fail to wish for more. The very first words are so cheering, so attracting: 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.'"

"Cheering indeed! But why did our Lord make that distinction: 'Ye believe in *God*, believe also in *me*?' *He was God.*"

"I think His meaning must have been, that the belief in God—the Creator—the Judge—could bring nothing but a sense of condemnation to the sinful soul; but Christ having reconciled God's justice to us, by suffering in our stead, we need not 'be troubled,' for there is henceforth no condemnation to them that are in Him,—Christ Jesus having, as St. Paul says, 'thrown down the middle wall of partition, making of two, one.' Does not that seem likely to be His meaning?"

"Yes, I think so. But will you tell me, Mary—though do not despise me, for being so very untaught in these things—how it was, that Christ reconciled us to God?"

"Dear Wilfred, you must know that Christ died for us."

"Yes, I know that in words, but still, somehow, it brings with it no definite idea to my mind. And when one thinks about it, the more He tells us our duty, and what we ought to do, the greater is our sin in not doing it."

"He saved us, not by the duties He taught us to do, but by enduring for us the punishment we deserve for not having done them. You know, Wilfred, that being God, he could not sin; and you know, too, that without sin there is no suffering. How could then Jesus have suffered, had not our sins been laid upon Him—he bearing the punishment of them for us? And as by His sufferings He took away our punishment, so by His having kept perfectly the holy law of God in our place, He has deserved for us, and given to us, eternal life."

"Then all in the world are saved?"

"Yes, they *are all saved*, but they do not all *come to salvation*, because they do not think about it, or care about it. The pardon is signed and sealed for all; but many are not the better for it, because they will not go and ask for it. If a kingdom had revolted, and a free pardon was proclaimed for all who came and sought it, would you not say there was pardon, or salvation, for all? But if some from thoughtlessness, and others from an unsubdued will, would not seek that pardon, then they would not benefit by it, though it lay there waiting for them; and on them therefore the condemnation of the law they had broken, would justly fall. Have I made my meaning clear? for I am but a poor explainer."

"Yes," I answered, much struck by what she had said. "But yet it seems such presumption! I should never dare to think I was pardoned—such a sinner as I am."

"If you asked it for any merits of your own, it would be presumption; but your claim is the merit of another."

"Yes, dear Mary, I understand that; but what right have I to go and ask for it, even though it is for the merit of another?"

"The right of having received a pressing invitation to accept it as a gift.

'Just as I am, without one plea,
Save that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O, Lamb of God! I come.'

These are solemn things," she added, "but full of eternal joy to the pardoned heart."

"But if I sinned after being pardoned, what then?"

"You grieve for that sin, and, confessing it, ask for more strength."

"But should I not be condemned for it?"

"Oh, no! God when He takes you for His child for Christ's sake, knows you are not perfect; He 'accepts you as you are, for you give yourself to Him, and gradually makes you such as He would have you to be.' Once saved, you are saved for ever; all your sins, past, present, and future, were all borne by Christ, and are therefore all pardoned. The *whole* work of your salvation was accomplished when our Lord bowed His head upon the cross and said: 'It is finished.'"

"Oh, Mary! can that be? Why, then we might do all that we liked."

"What would you like to do towards me, whom you love, Wilfred?"

"You? Please you of course, in everything, if I could."

"And those who love God, like to please Him in everything. When they do not, it is sorrow to them; and the more they feel the certainty of forgiveness, the more sorrow do they feel for offending Him who has forgiven them. If they kept from evil, for fear of condemnation, they would be working for themselves—an aim, as has been said, 'selfish and idolatrous;' but when they know that all their punishment has been borne for them, that their own concerns are all safe for ever,—then they love to please Him who has done such things for them. 'The love of Christ constraineth us,' St. Paul says, 'not to live unto ourselves, but unto Him who gave Himself for us;' and that love God puts into the hearts of all His children. In fact He puts Himself there, making us 'temples of the Holy Ghost.'"

"How wonderful these things seem!"

"How wonderful they are! but not more wonderful than that men should have such happiness offered them, and reject it."

"They do not know it to be happiness."

"No; like the men in Noah's time, 'They knew not, till the flood came, and carried them all away,' yet they had been told of it, for a hundred and twenty years. Oh! Wilfred! Christ is the only ark of safety. We seek for peace—we seek for happiness—vainly—till we find Him. 'Those who find Him seek no further.'"^{*}

"I will seek Him, Mary, and will begin reading to-night where you told me; and if I can, I will ask Bruce to do so too."

CHAPTER XI.

The Lord uphold and strengthen ye for your work; the Lord guide ye with the uplifting of His countenance, and give ye to walk firm in the midst of tribulation, and no' to falter or be weary in the way.—MERKLAND.

On leaving Mary I went below; and after having seen to a few things, I took up my Bible—for though I had never read it, I possessed one,—the gift of my mother—and looked for the chapter she had named to me. I expected some jeering from my messmates, should they observe my new occupation, but was determined that that should not prevent my doing what I now felt was a duty. The thought of pleasing Mary, and the charm of reading words which she delighted in, formed, I was aware, a great part of the motive which determined me to persevere, but by no means the whole. What she had said, had shown me the sin of treating with such contemptuous negligence the great "Letter" of my Heavenly Father, and I determined that no day of my life should henceforth pass, without my enriching my soul with some of its precious stores.

Little, however, did I anticipate the exceeding preciousness of the words I was about to read; and as I read them, and as somewhat of their spirit stole into my breast, how did I marvel at the blindness and folly which had so long made me shut out from myself such sunny influences, and such heavenly joy!

Well indeed had she chosen that portion of God's blessed Word, for a young and thoughtless heart like mine; for the ten-

^{*} Dunnallan.

derness and love there displayed, the power spoken of, and the peace promised, were supremely calculated to melt the icy breast, and send its gushing feelings upwards to its God! I read on, and on—I could not stop.

I was happily quite alone when I thus took my first draught of the pure "Waters of Life;" and it was well for me that the words: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," were still echoing through my heart, when I heard some of my ship-mates come down. I knew now the value of the treasure which was opened before me, and was not in a mood lightly to have it snatched from me, and I knew also on what arm I must depend for gaining the victory. I would not hastily put by my book, for I dreaded beginning by giving way to my own cowardice.

I breathed a hasty prayer, as I heard the rushing feet of several of the youngsters running down the ladder, in wild sport and spirits. I knew them all well, some vicious, some weak, some amiable; all with their faults—all, too, with their better qualities. I could not forget, merely because my own mind was now a little changed, the light way in which I too had been used to view these things, and I could not therefore but feel for those who were still unknowing of the vein of gold that had been opened to me.

I was not prepared before it was needful. They all burst into the berth like boys playing at "Hare and Hounds," when, on seeing my Bible before me, the foremost of them stopped short with a theatrical start, and silencing the others, advanced on tiptoe, as if about to examine some venomous beast. When he came close, he made a sudden dart at the Bible; but I, having watched him, unable almost to prevent laughing at his absurd ways, saw what his intention was, and catching it up, instantly deposited it in safety in the chest where I had always kept it. He then, as I was returning, flourished out both his hands, so as to call the others to take hold of them, and sang out,—

"Come let us dance this round-a-round-a-round, &c."

And all joining hands, they got in a circle round me, prancing with all imaginable antics, till, out of breath, they stopped, dropping down on chests, the deck, or whatever first presented itself. In the midst of the confusion, in came Bruce.

"Holloa!" he cried, "what's all this noise about?"

The prime mover stepped forward in the same theatrical way as before; and bowing low to Bruce, who looked the picture of scorn—for though full of fun himself, he had a hatred of everything approaching to buffoonery—said, in the most affected of voices,—

"It is only the ebullitions of joy in youthful spirits, Mr. Bruce, at the charming discovery that from amongst us wicked sinners has sprung up a 'Saint'—Clair."

"St. Clair, do you mean?" said Bruce in great indignation; going up to him as if he meant to knock him through the ship's side.

"My dear Bruce," I said, taking hold of his arm, "we have all been playing the fool together,"—for I had really laughed as much as the others, they were so very absurd—"and I am so hot that I must get out of this black-hole, so come up on deck with me." And I dragged him off, still scowling defiance at the others.

"What was it all about?" he said, when we got on deck.

"Oh! only they found me at the unwonted occupation of reading the Scriptures, and so were inclined to make merry a little at my expense. But there was no good in being angry about it; it will all do very well in a little while, and I don't care about it much."

"But what on earth have you taken to read the Scriptures for?" exclaimed Bruce contemptuously, forgetting how enraged he had been with the others but a minute before. "Are you turning Methodist? You'd better not, or you and I shall soon part company, I can tell you. I hate your canters, and psalm-singing scoundrels!"

I made no answer, for I did not choose to be spoken to in such a way, even by him,

He again repeated his question in still more offensive terms, and I still remained silent. Had I spoken, it must have been intemperately—an ill result of reading God's word, he would have thought.

"Can't you answer a man when he asks a plain question?" he said, in a most irritating tone.

"Yes," I replied, "when he asks it as he ought." And I turned away, and began talking to some one else.

He stopped in surprise when he saw I was gone, and stood still a moment, then resumed his walk more rapidly than before, coming so near me several times, as to brush by me as he passed. I felt my temper getting into a fearful storm, and I think I must have knocked him down, if he had done it again; but the words, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," rose to my remembrance, and stilled the tempest in my breast. Oh, how delightful it was thus to have the evidence of God's presence with me—having begun, as I had, to crave for His love and favour!

Just then too rose on my ear that voice which had been the messenger of grace to me, and which then came with an angel's power to soothe and strengthen. At its sound Bruce stopped short in his walk, and when he resumed it, it was with a quieter

step. He took his line too, I evidently saw, wider of me this time; so as he passed, my anger having vanished, I fell into the step with him, and we walked up and down together again, as quietly as if nothing had happened.

"What is she singing?" he asked at length, in a voice whose sadness went to my heart.

"Ruth," I replied.

"What are the words? You know them, I suppose?"

I repeated them; when coming to the passage, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God," he interrupted me, saying, in a tone vibrating between contempt and tenderness,—

"Was it that that set you reading your Bible this afternoon?"

"If you mean the wish that Mary's God should be mine," I replied, "yes; besides that she had herself begged me to read it."

"And so you think," he continued, all tenderness having left his voice, "that the wish to please a woman, and the poor-spiritedness that makes you do everything that a woman desires you, is religion, do you? I call it contemptible, insufferable cant and hypocrisy."

I often wonder that I did not strike him to the deck at that moment, for I felt suddenly on fire with rage; my blood boiled in my veins till I thought they would have burst. Furiously turning to him, I asked what he meant by speaking to me in that way.

He did not answer for a moment, checked a little by the storm he had raised in me; but his countenance instantly resuming its character of contempt—his eye glowing, and his nostril quivering with passion, he seemed about to launch forth some new insult, when the voice again sounded, and the words, "Entreat me not to leave thee," rose almost as an embodied form between us. The current of my feelings instantly changed, and had I been alone, I could have thrown myself upon the deck, and wept passionate tears in the bitterness of my spirit. I put up my hand vehemently, to stop Bruce's speaking, and said,—

"No more of this." And turning, I went below.

When there, I paused a moment to catch Mary's voice more distinctly, and again heard her pronounce the words, "Thy God, my God."

Oh! with what soothingness did they come to my heart!

"Yes!" I thought, "thy God *shall* be my God." And I covered my face with my hands, to force back the softened tears which the thought of Him whom my fierce passion must so much have displeased, caused to gush up from the very bottom of my soul. I dared not stay there, lest any one should see me, so turned into my berth; and as no one was there—with that

craving for spiritual things which the really awakened mind so invariably feels—I again drew forth my Bible, and once more read those blessed words, "Let not your heart be troubled."

Peace settled down again upon my soul, and, under its Heaven-sent influence, I wondered that things so light as human words should have power to lash the mind to such fury. I was young in godly feeling then, and knew not with what mighty power Satan works, when he finds the prey he had thought his own escaping from his grasp.

Though my soul was tranquillized under the word of God, yet my physical being was still all in agitation from the violence of my late feelings; and the thought that it was Bruce who had so insulted me—Bruce, for whom I had been willing to do so much—was the bitterest that ever crossed my mind. It seemed as if I could never call him friend again; for besides his enmity to religion, his words respecting me and Mary could not be forgotten.

CHAPTER XII.

His beautiful eyes! they ill become the flash
That blasts like lightning in its shoer descent.
Tears might have trembled on their long dark lash,
A seraph's tears!—
Or seraph-rapture might have glisten'd there,
When forth on messages of love he went,
To snatch the thorn-wreath from the brow of care,
Or bring to waiting hope the promised meed of prayer.

HANKINSON.

I was sitting brooding over Bruce's words in strange disturbance of mind, forgetful of the peace-giving volume which still lay open before me, when Palgrave, the ringleader in the late attack, came again into the berth. I scarcely thought of him however, for my mind was full of other things; and I should hardly have noticed him as he came in and went out again, had I not heard a sound of other feet at the half-opened door, and caught the words, spoken in a low whisper by one of the younger lads,—

"No, don't Palgrave, he was so good-humoured before."

"Hang his good-humour!" said Palgrave.

Still, however, I did not think of the Bible, so much did the painful thought of Bruce absorb me; till Palgrave, having re-entered the berth and walked quietly to the table, suddenly

snatched it up, and in an instant tossed it up to the beams. It had not far to go, and as it came down again, catching it on his foot, he kicked it up again. In an instant I had stretched him on the deck, and his head, coming in contact with one of our chests, was cut open, and bled profusely as he lay on his back stunned by the fall. All the others who had been staying behind the door rushed in, and Bruce, who had just come down stairs, came in with them. I was trying to lift Palgrave up.

"What's this?" he exclaimed, his eyes flashing with fury. "You have murdered him!"

"I hope not," I said, "for he is in no state to die." I had seen that he was only stunned, or I could never have answered with such apparent indifference.

"No, he's not dead," said Bruce, as he and some of the others helped to raise him from the deck,—“the better for you. Here, one of you, run for the surgeon, while I go to the Captain. Brutality like this shall not be suffered to pass.”

"Don't say a word against St. Clair," exclaimed the boy whose voice I had recognized at the door as expostulating with Palgrave—"for if he hadn't knocked that fellow down, I'd have done it myself."

I looked at the noble child as he spoke—the youngest, and the deserved "darling of our crew," a little fellow scarcely five feet high,—Bruce being above six—his boyish countenance glowing with indignation as he looked defiance up into the other's face,—a second David defying a second Goliath!

Bruce seized him by the arm with so fierce a grasp as shook his whole frame. The boy compressed his lips, evidently to keep back the cry of pain which that iron gripe almost forced from him, while he kept his kindling eye still full upon Bruce's.

I threw myself between them.

"Stand back," I cried to Bruce, "and keep your coward hands off the boy."

Bruce's whole fury then turned on me,—against whom in fact, it was all directed, for he had no personal spite against young D'Arcy, but had always loved the boy. He threw the child from him with a violence that sent him staggering back against the bulkhead, and rushing on me, seized me with both his hands round the throat. I should have been dead in a minute had I not thrown my arms round his body, and with a strength I can never think of without astonishment—for he was as tall and much stouter than I—hurled him to the deck.

At that moment the Captain entered, having been informed of the affray; and seeing my violence towards Bruce, instantly ordered me into arrest. In vain all voices were raised to say that the attack was commenced by Bruce; the Captain pointed

to Palgrave, who was still but partially recovered from his stupor, and to whom the surgeon was attending, and said,—

"At any rate, I am informed that Mr. St. Clair knocked this unfortunate young man down first."

So under arrest I was put.

I was about to speak in my own defence, but the Captain coldly said that it was too late then, and he could hear nothing that night on any side of the question; but that he was shocked beyond measure that such disgraceful outrages should take place in his ship.

"Let me have a report of Mr. Palgrave's case, Mr. Curtis," he said to the surgeon, "as soon as I leave General Sydney's cabin; for I must let him know what all the noise has been about, lest he should have been alarmed."

So saying—and saying so for my special edification I knew—he departed; and a moment after, we heard him knock at the General's door, and obtain admittance.

Bruce had risen to his feet the moment almost that he had touched the ground, and, subdued by the Captain's presence, had remained quite quiet while the latter was in the berth. He then walked out, saying as he passed me,—

"This does not end here, Mr. St. Clair."

I made no reply, but followed the marine to whom I was given in charge,—having first secured my ill-used Bible, and shaken hands with my messmates, all of whom gave me some kind word. Palgrave had been removed to the sick-berth.

When I got to my berth, I asked to be allowed to speak to D'Arcy, and after some little time the boy came to me.

"D'Arcy," I said, "I'm sorry I've brought you into trouble."

"I'm very glad if you have," he replied.

"Why?"

"Because it makes me see what a frightful thing it is for fellows to go on without the Bible, or God, or anything. What would my poor father say if he knew I'd hardly ever opened a good book since I came on board? for he bade me never go to bed, let me be as tired as I might, without reading a verse or two, at least, of the Bible. But I found nobody did it here, so I was ashamed, and let it drop."

"But don't do so any more, my boy."

"No, I shall take care of that," he answered; "this has been a good lesson for me."

"We must strengthen each other, D'Arcy," I said, "and never let bad example get the better of us again; God help us, for we need it sorely. I hope Palgrave is not much hurt. I was wrong in what I did, but it was done before I had time to think, —his doing that put me in such a rage."

"I don't know, I'm sure, whether you were right or wrong," replied the boy; "all I can say is, as I said to Bruce, if you hadn't done it, I should—or have tried—myself. He's not much hurt though, I heard them say, and I hope it'll teach him better manners another time."

"Now, D'Arcy," I said, "I want you to do me a service. I want you to take this to General Sydney's cabin as soon as the Captain leaves it. I can't seal it, but you won't open it I know, for you're as honourable as you're brave."

"I should hope not," he replied, proudly; "but thank you for trusting me." And his voice quivered.

"I would trust you," I said, drawing the little fellow to me, "before almost—ay, *now*, before any man alive." And it seemed as if my heart must burst as the thought of Bruce again flashed across me.

"Those are great words, St. Clair," said the boy, looking up with flashing eyes into my face; "and I hope you'll never find you've been wrong in using them."

I had torn a slip of paper out of my pocket-book, on which I had written these words:—

"Forgive me, Mary, I have been very violent; but I could not see the word of God contemptuously treated, nor a child ill-used. Pray for me, and for the little fellow who takes this—and for Bruce. Send me one word in answer."

"You'll ask if there's anything to bring back," I said, as I gave it him; "and be quick, my boy."

When again alone, the realities of my position for the first time vividly flashed upon me. It was not unusual in such cases, for young officers to be expelled the service,—a sentence I always thought—unless under most aggravated circumstances—harsh even to cruelty, considering the utter ruin it brings in general on their future prospects, and the little pains that are generally taken by captains of ships, either by precept or example, to teach them to control their tempers; and if such a sentence were passed upon me—and that it might be, the Captain's enmity made it, I thought, but too probable—what would become of me? Would Mary marry me with such a blot upon my name? My heart instantly answered, "Yes." But would her father permit it? Would I?

These were terrible thoughts. My poor mother, too

But I did Captain Normanton injustice. Though, from having been a favourite, second only to Bruce, I had evidently of late become an object of aversion to him, yet he was a strictly honourable man. Hard and tyrannical he certainly was, and

set upon having his own way, even in the merest trifle; but to have done an ungentlemanlike or dishonourable action, of that he was incapable. If his decision were stern, it would be the result only of the natural harshness of his disposition, and of what he thought the interests of the service required, and not a personal vindictive feeling.

While thinking on this distracting subject, D'Arcy returned, bringing with him, as I had hoped, a line from Mary.

"You're the fleetest minister that ever lived," I said.

"The Captain was gone, you see," he replied; "and I asked her to be quick."

"What made you give my note to Miss Sydney? I had not directed it to her."

"I didn't give it her," he replied; "I gave it to the old General, and he gave it her, and bid her answer it. But that doesn't signify," he added, smiling, "we all know about *that—that's* no secret."

"What's no secret?" I asked, looking at Mary's note, though I could not bear to open it in the boy's presence.

"It's no secret that you and Miss Sydney are much of the same mind on most subjects; at least so they say," he answered.

"That's what they say, is it?" I replied lightly. "Perhaps they're right, and perhaps they're wrong. But now I mustn't keep you longer, so good night, my boy! You're the best fellow I know. God bless you!"

We shook hands heartily, and he left the berth. Then I opened Mary's letter, not without heart-sinkings, for I dreaded lest her mild and gentle nature should have been deeply shocked by my violence. How can I describe then the delight—the surprise with which I read these words—

"I may be wrong for not blaming you much, but from Mr. Bruce's account, I cannot be thankful enough for the feeling you have shown. May God strengthen you in all things.—Yours ever—ever yours,
"MARY SYDNEY."

What blessed words!

But—"Bruce's account?" I exclaimed, "what can she mean?—She must have meant the Captain's. Yet he was not likely to make out a very favourable account for me."

"Be it as it might," I thought, "at least she is not angry with me—she does not blame me much!" And that thought brought calm to my troubled spirits, and allayed a little the burning fever which excitement had brought on.

CHAPTER XIII.

If rightly you love God,
You love your brother too.

* * * * *

Like you

Is he not sailing on a strange wild sea?
Do not the same stars guide his wandering way?
How canst thou hate thy brother? Oh! forgive,
If he hate thee; is it not excellent
That thou canst learn to stammer forth one word,
Such as is used in Heaven? In earthly speech
It is forgiveness. Hast thou never heard
Of One who, while He wore a crown of thorns,
Forgave His foes, prayed for His murderers?
Do you not know Him?

TEGNER (*Bethune's Translation*).

THE emotion which Mary's note had excited had a little passed away, and I was once more reading, and with what deepened feeling! the blessed words of eternal love, when the marine who had me in charge came in and gave me a note, which he said had come from Mr. Bruce, adding that he would call in a few minutes for an answer.

I took the note, but I could not open it for a time. The sight of his handwriting brought him so vividly before my eyes—him in his bright and generous beauty—him in his dark insulting ferocity!—till as I thought of him, I alternately glowed with man's heartfelt friendship, and man's indignant scorn. I could scarcely believe it was the same being who could appear in characters so different—different as light from darkness! Then seizing his note, I opened it with a hurried hand. It contained but few words:—

"For God's sake forgive me, St. Clair! I am most wretched!"

Strange as it may seem, not all the thrilling emotions which Mary's affection—life of my life as it was!—not all the combined agitations of my existence put together, equalled one half of what I felt at that moment. Strong attachment amongst men is perhaps rare, but it can be intense!

I snatched up a pen, and had almost illegibly—so powerfully was my whole frame shaken—written in answer—"Forgive you! yes! with heart, and soul, and strength!" when I jumped up and called the marine, saying, "I must see Mr. Bruce!"

In a few minutes he was with me.

Years might have passed in that brief time, so full was it of feeling! We wrung each other's hands in silence again and again, as if we could not be thankful enough.

"You forgive me, St. Clair?" he said, at length.

"You know I do, Bruce."

"I cannot account for what I did," he exclaimed; "I felt like a madman—and now I'm so utterly miserable. I had almost rather you should abuse me for hours, than forgive me."

"You have more than made up for everything," I said, "by writing what you did to Miss Sydney."

"How do you know I wrote to her?"

"She told me in a note; and it has saved me the pain of having pained her, and has proved you, too—what I always thought you—the most generous fellow in the world."

"It was but truth," he said sadly.

"I was not without my share of blame."

"You had no blame," he answered quickly; "none but a dastard coward would have acted otherwise. I cannot tell why I felt in such a fury. I really believe I was possessed by the devil! Though, I must say, that when I came down, and saw that fellow Palgrave lying on the ground, bleeding away, I'd no idea of what he'd been doing; I should never have taken his part if I had. When I found it out, I was confounded, and could almost have said, with that fine lad D'Arcy, 'If you hadn't done it, I would myself.' Though I don't read the Bible, yet none but a brute would have used it as he did."

"That little fellow is one of a thousand," I exclaimed.

"Yes, and if you'd seen him afterwards, you'd never have forgotten him. When I had heard what the thing was, I could not rest without asking his forgiveness for my—what you justly called—'coward' attack upon him. He said it was 'nothing—nothing;' but I forced him to bare his arm, which I thought almost I must have broken, and when I saw the horrid marks of my brutal violence on his young flesh, my very heart turned sick. He spoke so nobly, and so feelingly, and bade me think no more about it, as if I could help it! You and he may read your Bibles for ever, as far as I'm concerned, if it is that which makes you both have such patience with me."

"I haven't read it much yet," I replied. "It was only this evening that I had my initiation—a stormy one certainly—into its powerful comforts. But powerful they are! I wish, Bruce, you would try them. Miss Sydney begged me so earnestly to ask you to do so."

"Miss Sydney! Why should she care what I do?"

"Of course she feels a great interest in you—naturally. So

do yield to her earnest wish, and read the words she loves so much."

"If I would, I've got no Bible."

"I will lend you mine," I exclaimed, eagerly; "and begin, will you, at the words she pointed out to me. I'm sure we both need them to-night."

"What are they?"

"Let not your heart be troubled."

"Need them! Yes, I think so!" he exclaimed with a bursting sigh. "But it is very well to say, 'Let not your heart be troubled,' but how is one to help it?"

"Only by prayer, I think."

"Prayer! what do you know of prayer, St. Clair?"

"Not much, certainly; but just enough to show me that it gets for one what one wants. I do not mean always earthly things, I mean the wants of one's spirit—peace, strength, and comfort."

"They are indeed needed," he exclaimed, clasping his hands above his head agonizingly for a moment.

"I'm a great fool," he then said; "and I suppose shall be so all my life. I shall be better of this folly though when I am ashore, and away from her, with no chance of seeing her, or hearing that voice of hers that tears my heart to pieces. It was what she sung I really believe this evening that put me at last into such a frenzy. At first it softened me; but when you told me the words, and I knew she was singing them—speaking them to you—I felt as if I could have killed you! God forgive me! it is very terrible to be the slave of such passions."

"It will be better when you get home, and are amid new scenes and old friends. But now—think, I beseech you, on what Miss Sydney called the 'lost state of your soul.'"

"Lost! Did she call me lost?" he exclaimed in evident agitation.

"She did, and I felt indignant at first; but she soon showed me that, though a person may be excellent and delightful as far as this world goes, yet if they have not greater love for God than for all else, it proves they are not His children, and consequently must be lost."

He made no answer, but I saw by the expression and working of his features, that he was ill at ease.

"Her saying this," I added after a few minutes, "proved to me that I was not His faithful servant any more than you, Bruce. But somehow I cannot but feel that of late there has been a great change in me. I delight in these things now more than in anything else, for I am not always happy, even when with Mary, unless she speaks to me of them; and it was, I

think, the great joy I had felt in reading the Scriptures to-night, which made me so very indignant with Palgrave for doing what he did."

"Palgrave's a brute," exclaimed Bruce vehemently.

"No, not that," I said; "but he is so accustomed to turning things into ridicule, that he loses all proper respect for everything, besides particularly detesting all that is in the least serious. But he is a good-natured fellow."

"And do you feel easy, St. Clair, under the idea—the possibility even of being lost?" asked Bruce, recurring to the subject in an anxious tone; "or do you feel as if something would somehow save you?"

"I feel certain of nothing as yet," I replied; "but I seem to get a little higher by degrees, in the scale of existence, not to be the mere worldling that I was before; and I feel as if I had something, too, of the love of God. Still, if I were away from those who speak of Him, I might perhaps sink again as low as I was before. But constantly I use the prayer that Mary asked me to say—"Oh God, take my heart to Thyself, for I cannot give it to Thee; and when Thou hast taken it, Thou wilt keep it for Thyself, for I cannot keep it for Thee.'"

"Say it again," said Bruce.

I did so; and I observed his lips moving as if he were trying to remember it.

He was forced to leave me, and he took my Bible away with him. I longed for it sorely as I sat alone in my berth, but could not grudge it to him; and earnestly did I pray that reading it might be of as great comfort to him as it had been to me. With what royal munificence was that prayer answered!

I occupied myself for some time in such poor thoughts of God as I could command, and which, blended as they were with the remembrance of Mary's words and gentle persuasions, seemed inexpressibly delightful to me. As I pondered over all that had passed, I could not acquit myself of blame so completely as Bruce's generous spirit had done. I would not certainly have wished to have seen unmoved such shameless outrage against God as Palgrave had been guilty of, but still I could not but feel, that calm remonstrance would have been more in conformity with Christ's mild wisdom, than the passionate outbreak I had given way to; and I prayed earnestly that never again might I be permitted so to sin against God. "Be ye angry and sin not," I afterwards read in the Scripture, and found how exactly the injunction suited my case.

CHAPTER XIV.

To thee God is telling this day the story of His free love, that, receiving it, thou mayest not perish, but have everlasting life. That free love, thus received into thy heart in believing, would fill thee with joy unspeakable. It would be like fragrance from the flowers of Eden, like sunshine from the very heaven of heavens. It would not call on thee to wait till thou hast made thyself ready for receiving it, it would come into thee at once, like sunlight into thy lattice, without insisting that thy chamber be adorned for its reception. It would cost thee nothing but the giving up of that which is far better lost, and which would be but a poor recompense for a ruined soul.—BONAR.

AFTER a sleep unusually sound, for I was thoroughly wearied, body and mind, I was awakened in the morning by the marine, who came to tell me that Palgrave had had a good night, and that the surgeon said there was nothing but a slight cut on the head, which need not in the least interfere with his duty, all of which was of course very welcome news to me.

After a time I was summoned for the examination which was to take place concerning the last night's affray; and witnesses were called, and accounts given, and everything took place which usually does take place on those occasions. The result was, that all three of the principals were reprimanded, more or less severely, according to the discretion of the Captain, but no further punishment inflicted. He said that such flagrant breaches of order could not have been passed over by him in so light a manner, had it not been that our mutual connection was so soon to cease. That after having had the command for some years, of as fine a crew and excellent a set of officers—so he was pleased to say—as any in his majesty's service, he should have felt it a deep wound to his pride as well as to his feelings, to have had to report his vessel in a state of disorder when he went into port, or to have parted with old friends under a sense of painful displeasure. He then proceeded to address each of the offending parties; and I must say that his mode of acting towards me did him much credit,—actuated, as I knew he was, by no internal bias in my favour. He said that under ordinary circumstances, the violence of my conduct towards Mr. Palgrave must have been visited with marks of high displeasure, but that the fact of his having so grossly outraged, not only my feelings, but those of every one who had the least respect for the Almighty or His holy law, greatly altered the case; and that

though he disapproved the strong measures I had used, he could not but participate in the feelings which had led to them. He spoke also in high commendation of the spirit which young D'Arcy had shown ; saying, with much kindness, that he hoped he might live to exhibit equal firmness and courage some day before the enemies of his country. His address to Palgrave was very severe ; tinctured, moreover, with contempt.

He spoke to Bruce the last ; and though all he said was just, yet I could not endure to hear him speak to him with such severity before us all. He knew, perhaps, that he was suspected of favouring him in general above the others—and especially, latterly, above me—and he seemed determined in this case to do me even more than justice. I was much struck by Bruce's manner of receiving what was said ; for it was no small trial to a haughty spirit like his, to have such animadversions made before his shipmates. No trace, however, of indignation appeared, though there was deep emotion ; and no words can describe the beauty of his countenance as, raising his eyes, when Captain Normanton paused, he said with deep feeling,—

“It is all true, sir !”

Captain Normanton was visibly moved ; and his countenance instantly relaxing at this frank avowal of error, he added, “that, notwithstanding what had just passed, he could not withhold his testimony as to the perfect manner in which Mr. Bruce had, till that unfortunate moment, conducted himself ever since he had been under his command ; and as this was his first, so he felt confident, would it be his last offence, let the term of his life be what it might.”

A murmur of extreme approbation was heard throughout the whole party at this, while Bruce bowed gratefully. The Captain then spoke to us in a way that greatly touched me, and probably all present. He said that he felt sure that after what had happened we should all vie with each other as to which could best maintain the discipline of the ship for the few remaining days we should be together, and keep unbroken the bonds of good-fellowship with those with whom we had been so long on friendly terms, and from whom we were about to part, possibly never to meet again ; and he hoped that those who had been engaged in the last night's unfortunate affair would show that all angry feeling had passed away by cordially shaking hands.

This was immediately done, and I am sure I was glad enough that Palgrave had a hand to shake ; for, though a favourite with none of us, yet till the last night we had always been very good friends.

Bruce's manner on this occasion was perfectly characteristic of him. He had had no quarrel with Palgrave, therefore was

not called upon to shake hands with him, but he passed him by with marked contempt, while in shaking hands with D'Arcy and me, he showed the greatest warmth of manner, taking his place between us, and resting his arm on D'Arcy's shoulder, during the few remaining words which the Captain addressed to us.

The boy's face glowed with pleasure; and as I looked at them both, I thought I had never seen two finer or more noble countenances. The younger of them is now gone to his rest. I was with him at his death a few years after; and it was delightful to see how completely God redeems His word of promise to be with His people at all times, and how His presence can animate and illumine the road that leads direct to Him.

When the trial was over, and the Captain had departed, Bruce took my arm, and we went to our berth.

"Oh! St. Clair," he exclaimed, after a minute's silence, "you do not know what a change has taken place in me since last we met. You gave me the word of God to read, and I did read it—not only the chapter you pointed out, but many more—I could not stop. The incidents of the evening, and the wretchedness I felt from many causes, had perhaps prepared my mind for receiving with solemnity the words of heavenly truth; but instead of finding them, as I expected, hard and full of condemnation, I found them full of a charm I cannot describe, and, as you know, full of love, and peace, and pardon. I felt as if in a new existence, so holy an atmosphere seemed to be around me. The world, its jars and jealousies, almost its loves and affections, seemed to sink away too far beneath me to ruffle, or disturb; and I was able to pray, long and earnestly—a thing I had never done before in my life. At first I felt such a sense of sin as quite overpowered me; but at last the thought of Christ's perishing for sinners was brought to my mind, and in an instant the burden on my heart was gone. I felt at peace—and pardoned."

"Bruce!" I exclaimed, in extreme surprise, "what can you mean?"

"I mean what I say," he replied; "I felt as if my spirit was washed from all its stains, and my soul pardoned all its sins; and *that* through the blood of Christ."

I was bewildered. I have said that often, when talking to Mary, I could not understand the meaning of many things she said; for, though I had begun to feel the deepest interest in the subject, I was still very dark as to the way of salvation. And

now, when I heard Bruce—Bruce, who but yesterday was reviling me as a hypocrite, and despising my weak efforts after godliness—heard him speak things so contrary to all he had ever said or thought before,—it seemed as if I was under some spell of necromancy. Had not my mind become accustomed to Mary's pious, God-fraught feelings, I should have fancied he was raving; but recognizing in his new expressions the same thoughts and high feelings which seemed ever the native air of her soul, I could not but believe them to be words of truth, and workings of the Spirit of God.

I sat dumb under this evidence of His mighty power,—stupified at the feeling, that wondrous things were passing before me, without my being able to see them—marvellous sounds rushing by, without my hearing them—overpowering influences shedding themselves abroad, without my feeling them.

It was but a few short hours since I had sat in that same spot, endeavouring to persuade Bruce to take for the first time into his reluctant hand, the page of Inspiration; and now he was in sunshine on the mountain-top, while I was still toiling my darkling way up its steep, and often rugged sides! All the joy and sweetness I had so often felt in the thought of those heavenly heights to which love divine—through the sanctified medium of earthly affection—was slowly leading my weak and wavering soul, seemed gone from me; and I felt depressed and abandoned, as I could imagine the solitary Elisha would have felt, when he saw his master borne off to heaven in his fiery chariot, had he not had the mantle of his spirit sent down to raise his own soul to the same glorious regions. I was not envious of Bruce's happiness, but I sat there with a soul-sinking sense of spiritual abandonment.

He put his kind hand on my shoulder, and said in a cheering voice,—

"Why so silent, St. Clair? I thought you would have been the first to help me to praise God for His wondrous mercy to me."

"I do from my soul thank Him," I replied; "but I feel left so far behind myself, that all energy and spirit seems gone from me."

"Surely, St. Clair," he said, "when you see what God's mighty power can do in subduing so worthless and rebellious a spirit as mine was but a fleet twelve hours ago, you cannot despond!—you! the fearless champion of His honour—the faithful preacher of His love! Was it not you that persuaded me to read His word—you who placed its precious pages within my hand? Have you not been the minister of salvation to my

soul—the being who has snatched me from destruction, and led me to Him who says, not in vain, ‘My peace give I unto you?’ And is it for *you* to despond?”

His animated words cheered me a little, and I replied,—

“No! I do not despond, or doubt God’s merciful intentions towards me; and when listening to Mary, I have always felt peace and joy follow her words into my heart. But she leads me on line by line, word by word; and though even then I cannot always follow her, yet there seems always something which, by prayer and patience, I may attain in time. But to see you, all of a sudden, from such desperate darkness, rush into such light!—to see you, who but yesterday despised the whole thing so thoroughly, now admitted to the full joy and privilege of a child of God, while I can still only look, and long, and feebly strain after some little glimpse of heaven—all this seems to throw me back fathoms deep into the shade, as if I had but little part in the thoughts or heart of God.”

“It is not so, St. Clair! I am sure it is not so! I feel convinced that you are much, much higher in God’s love than I am. His mercy has indeed been wonderful to me, but what—what have I done for Him? What has my life been but one dark offence against Him? Oh! I cannot bear to think of it!”

“It is marvellous, indeed,” I said, “that He should have stooped to think of either of us. His mercy being so great, makes our sin the greater; and at times I feel quite wretched from the sense of it, and the dread that I can never be fit for Heaven, so never get there. It seems such a frightful thing to sin again and again as I do.”

“Don’t you remember a short prayer, St. Clair, that I found written, and laid in your Bible: ‘Accept me, Lord, as I am, and make me such as Thou wouldst have me to be?’”

“Yes. Mary wrote it for me, and I put it where you found it to-night, that I might always remember to use it.”

“Well! my belief, St. Clair, is, that God has accepted you as you are, and is making you—and quickly too—‘such as He would have you to be.’ I even see an immense difference in you.”

“Do you?” I exclaimed, cheered for the moment. “It was much needed.”

“Yes! we shall all need mending, to our lives’ end. But what I feel is, that all our mending can never take us to Heaven; but that Christ has done that by His own all-perfect merit, which needs indeed no mending and no change! I must try now and work for Him, for He has done all my work for me, and made me His eternal debtor.”

CHAPTER XV.

Much eloquent thought and many a cheering word
Refresh'd the thirsting heart like early dew.

TEGNER (*Bethune's Translation*).

Soon after this conversation, Bruce and I were requested to go into General Sydney's cabin. The kind old man had no idea of the penance he was imposing on Bruce, but it was, I saw, a very trying moment for him.

In answer to the General's thanks, he stammered something of his "deserving nothing but blame;" and turning towards Mary, who also thanked him, he hurriedly pressed the hand she held out to him to his lips, and abruptly left the cabin.

I had not liked to approach her whilst he was there, but the moment he was gone, I was at her side.

As we were still talking over the late events, we were called up to take a first view of a long ridge of blue land, just visible in the offing, which, when we had mounted on deck, I pointed out to Mary as the country of her father, and her own future home. She seemed affected as she fixed her eyes upon it.

"Had she sorrowful forebodings of what might befall her there," I asked, "as she looked so sad?"

"No," she replied; "I merely felt, as I approached those new scenes, that yearning towards the home of my childhood which I cannot always repress. No! I have no forebodings of evil, but have all happiness to look forward to there."

How many delightful schemes did we plan for ourselves! Day-dreams of happiness, real to the heart!

I told her then of the astonishing change that had taken place in Bruce's feelings; an account which filled her with surprise and delight. I mentioned, too, the despondency that his rapid progress in the faith of the Gospel had produced in my mind, and of the generous and kindly manner in which he had endeavoured to cheer me.

"I am sure that he is right," she said, "and that your earnest desire to know the truth, and fearless acting up to the knowledge you already have, are as much a proof of God's love as his quick-sprung zeal and faith can be; for God says: 'With this man will I dwell, even with him that is of a lowly

and a contrite heart, and that trembleth at my word.' You do that, Wilfred, surely! And then remember that it is said: 'If any man will do the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be true or not.' Your will is, I am sure, to do God's will."

"I think I may truly say," I replied, "that it is; so I ought to be able to trust Him. Times and seasons are I know, in His hands; so when He thinks it best that I should clearly see my way, He will no doubt send light from Heaven to guide me. Now, I must trust Him blindfold, as an infant trusts its mother."

"Yes!" she exclaimed; "He is expanding the powers of faith, and trust, and love in you now, my dear Wilfred, and soon the 'Spirit that bloweth where it listeth' will waft knowledge also into your soul."

How soothingly her words fell upon my ear! and my heart felt comforted under their influence. Even when not speaking of heavenly things, there was a charm inexpressible in her words; and how much more so when *they* were her theme! I often felt tempted to exclaim in her own mellifluous tongue:

"Al labbro tuo, chi diede
Tanta dolcezza?"

(To thy lips, who gave such sweetness?)

But "of a spirit pure and musical they were the pure and musical expression." Her voice too was so exquisite—it was "a portion of her beauty."

"Like music to the heart it came."

We scudded up Channel under easy sail; and glad I was to near the shores of England again. To me the thought of being there was indeed delightful; for I knew that then I could be constantly with Mary, without having our mutual happiness damped by the sight either of the love or the hate of others.

General Sydney had no very near relations left; and his long stay on the Continent, and the little intercourse he had kept up with any of his friends in England, had made him nearly a stranger in his own country, which nevertheless, as the land of his birth, he desired to return to and see once more. As therefore the time for his disembarkation drew near, he felt uncertain as to whither he should turn his steps.

I had heard long before from my mother, in answer to the

letter in which I had told her of my engagement, when she had expressed her delight at the prospect of my happiness, and her anxiety to become acquainted with Mary; and a little while before we started on our homeward voyage, I had received another letter from her, saying that she was going to stay for some time at Dover, and that it was there she wished me to go as soon as my ship was paid off. I mentioned this to Mary, saying what an immense happiness it would be to me if they would also go there, where they could become acquainted with my mother, and we could be constantly together. She agreed in thinking that it would be very delightful, and mentioned it to her father. He had been quartered there many years before, and various pleasant recollections it seemed were attached to the place. He moreover felt rather desolate in returning to a land of strangers, and seemed to like the idea of going immediately near some one who, he thought, would feel an interest in him; and having often expressed his desire to become acquainted with my mother, was well pleased that the opportunity should present itself so soon.

The plan therefore met with his entire approval; and as our ship was to go into dock at Woolwich for repairs, he asked Captain Normanton if it would inconvenience him for them to be landed either from the Downs, or, if possible, at Dover. Captain Normanton could not refuse, though it was evident he did not like losing their society so soon; and it was therefore agreed that it should be so.

It really pained me to see the exceeding annoyance that he felt at this arrangement. His attentions never for a moment relaxed towards Mary; it seemed indeed intolerable to him to be separated from her for a moment. First she must come up and look at the Plymouth Breakwater, then admire the sloping lawns, and the woods, feathering almost to the water's edge, in the beautiful grounds of Mount Edgecumbe. Then it was Portland Isle—the Needles—the cheerful shores of the Isle of Wight—Portsmouth! anything, in short, and everything which could form an excuse for drawing *her* forth, whose loved presence was so soon to depart from him.

It was sad to see his almost frantic devotion to her,—a devotion which seemed to live upon her coldness, and grow upon her avoidance. There was something so intense in his feeling, that it took an almost heroic character in my eyes; and even those among us who used to laugh most upon the subject, now treated with respect a sentiment so strong and deep.

I kept out of the way as much as I could get myself to do, and Bruce and I were much together. His happy hope still glowed brightly in his breast, and often imparted a portion of

its warmth to my heart also. Great indeed was the change in his feelings, and I could have listened to him for ever as he spoke of the love of God and the joy of salvation. But he could not as yet bring those high feelings down to the things of earth, nor see that they were intended to regulate the whole man, from the greatest to the least emotion of his heart. He would continue his strong, often offensive way of speaking of persons and things; always for instance, calling the Captain "that fellow," and Palgrave "that brute;" declaring in answer to any remonstrances, that the Captain *was* a "fellow," and Palgrave *was* a "brute!" Yet could he have hoped to do them spiritual good, he would have exerted himself night and day in their service.

How various are the ways by which God leads men's souls to His reconciled love, and "teaches them in His way." Bruce had been, as it were, almost without one wistful look, one longing aspiration, by the power of a mighty arm, snatched from the whelming flood. For a moment only he had felt the deadly Maelstrom-guilt of sin whirling him down to destruction; but the next, he had been upborne in safety, and triumphantly planted on the "baseless rock of ages." He had attained salvation before he had made one step in reformation, and all the sanctifying work of the Spirit had therefore to be begun in him; and borne away even as his ardent heart was by the flaming love of God, conscious too, as he was, of the high aim set before him, it was yet long ere he learnt that the ways of the godly amongst his fellow-men should ever be "ways of pleasantness" and "paths of peace," and that he ought to endeavour to "adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things."

I, on the contrary, was still in mighty darkness. I had begun with the rudiments—the very first letter of spirituality, and gone gradually on, without knowing to what glorious heights such teaching was to lead me. My soul, and heart, and mind had all become elevated and refined by intercourse with her I loved, and by inhaling the pure atmosphere of heaven with which she seemed ever surrounded; but as yet, no one doctrine of Christ was clearly revealed to my understanding. Yet my conscience had become wakeful, and I could not but watch over myself lest I should offend that High Being whose purity was one of the things which made His blessed idea so very precious to me; and continual were my endeavours, not only to pluck from my heart all that could displease Him, but to cherish every high and holy aspiration that might bring me nearer to His Divine nature. Yes! "Pure should be the eyes destined to

behold the King on His throne. Pure should be the hands destined to strike the harp of His praise. Pure should be the feet destined to walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem."

This "diversity of operation by the self-same spirit," in those who are saved, should I think, make us cautious in judging and condemning others because they cannot always see the same things, at the same moment, in the same way as ourselves. Providing a man be really in earnest to serve God for His love's sake, and place all his trust in Christ—he is sure of coming to salvation; and though he may not walk by the same hedge-side, or touch one blade of grass, or grain of dust that we do—yet, if he be travelling the same road, he must attain the same end; and why should we be at enmity with those by the way, whom we hope to meet in an eternity of never-ending happiness—whom we hope to call "friends," when these feeble bodies of death shall be put off, and we shall all be perfected in Christ Jesus?

"Think not that that which seemeth right to thee,
Must needs be so for all men. Thou canst see
Footprints of light upon the world's high-way,
Left there by Him who had not where to lay
His lowly head—the plainest nearest thee.
There may be footprints which thou canst not see,
Made plain by Heaven's light to other men.
Jesus went many ways into Jerusalem!"

CHAPTER XVI.

Marvel not at life—Patience shall see
The perfect work of wisdom to her given.
Hold fast thy soul through His high mystery,
And it shall lead thee to the gates of Heaven.

MRS. BUTLER.

THE day at length arrived for General Sydney and his daughter to leave the vessel. We were already off the point of Dungeness, and the white cliffs of Dover came in sight. The packages were all on deck ready for removal; and a bright sun and gentle wind offered no hope to Captain Normanton of being able to delay their disembarkation. I could not bear to see his agitation as the hour approached, and I left the deck and went below. There I found Bruce much in the same state; though with this difference, that with him there was the blank of utter hopelessness, while with the other a determined hope gave battle still, and would not be driven from the field. He seemed resolved to leave

no chance untried to attain his object; and torn by disappointment, and maddened with jealousy, he yet seemed determined never to abandon the point. He asked General Sydney's leave to visit him at Dover as soon as his duties would allow him time, and the old man, not having the least idea of the feelings which prompted his assiduity, and being extremely grateful for all the kindness he really had received from him, was warm in his hospitable expressions, and encouraged him by all means to come and visit them as soon and as often as possible, assuring him of the extreme pleasure it would give both him and his daughter to see him at any time.

I was present when he said this one day, and I saw that Captain Normanton looked anxiously at Mary for a confirmation of her father's words. She was looking down at first, busied with something in her hand; but conscious that his eyes were on her, she looked up and murmured something indistinctly civil, not to vex her father, though the expression of her eye must have spoken in a language far more plain, and less pleasing to Captain Normanton. His answering look I shall never forget; it was not one of entreaty, or tenderness, or regret, but of appalling determination—of smiling defiance—from which I saw her shrink in terror, while her cheek grew blanched beneath his eye. I saw that he had the fell determination of pursuing her unrelentingly; and doubtless her father's pressing offers and encouragements gave him the idea that in him he should find an irresistible ally. I could scarcely remain a quiet spectator of the scene, so displeasing and intolerable was the expression of his countenance. Yet I dared not interpose, dreading to add to Mary's discomfort instead of relieving it.

Dungeness Point was passed—and then Folkestone, and the line of Martello towers; and the time could not longer be delayed for ordering the boat to be in readiness and the ship's head to be turned so as to stand in a little for the bay. The wind was so light that we lay almost becalmed. The boat was lowered amid a painful silence, for the principal actors in the scene seemed but little disposed to speak, and all the rest were intently watching that which has ever so strong and fascinating an interest for all men: the working of human passions, and the play of human feelings. As my eye rested in turn on the many faces assembled round, there was scarcely a look that was not bent with intent scrutiny either on Captain Normanton's agitated countenance, or on the pale face of the fair girl who stood there the object of his sad devotion.

She too was troubled, for she felt the pain of parting, perhaps for ever, from those who had been so kind and attentive to her comfort and wishes; for there was not one in the whole ship, as I

have said before, that had not felt the magic of her presence among them, and who would not have done anything to serve or please her.

All was in readiness, and the men seated at their oars, when Captain Normanton desired Bruce to go down and see that everything was stowed away properly in the boat. Bruce started at receiving this order, and turning very pale, looked towards me, as if he feared I might be disappointed or displeased at his going. But I never had the least idea that the Captain would have wished for my company, and I only regretted Bruce's having to go, because I knew it would be an additional trial to him. I nodded to him however, with a smile, which seemed to set his mind so far at ease, and he descended the ship's side to do as he had been ordered. Captain Normanton seemed to feel some apology due for not taking me, as I was *par excellence* the friend of the Sydneys, for he spoke to me, and made some trifling excuse.

I bowed; and all being now in readiness, General Sydney and his daughter turned to take leave of their friends. Mary spoke kindly to all, and particularly distinguished young D'Arcy and Palgrave; the former, because she really loved the boy, the latter, because she felt a magnanimous desire to be kind to one who had offended me, as well as really feeling a pity for the poor fellow, as no one had been very cordial to him since the day of the affray. He seemed much touched by her kindness; and I felt convinced, that if ever he were again inclined to kick the Bible up to the beams, the remembrance of Mary's gently-rebuking kindness would deter him from it a thousand times more than all my violence. No wiser fable than that of the "Wind and the Sun!"

Mary had hold of her father's arm, but Captain Normanton, as she was about to descend, begged her to take his. She did so, but turned at the top of the stair to say "Farewell!" to me. That word was all that passed, and we shook hands and parted—but for a little time, as we hoped; yet even that short farewell was more than the Captain's patience could stand. He hurried her down, and placing her in the boat where Bruce had to receive her, seated himself by her side, after having seen the old General safe in also; and all being quickly arranged, the oars fell into the water, and the boat began rapidly moving towards the shore.

As Mary had looked up to me on mounting the ship's side on the waters of the blue Mediterranean beneath the bright sun of her own native land, so did she now look up from that boat as it darted over the green waves that washed the cloudy shores of England; and as I stayed watching it till it entered the harbour and was hid from sight by the pier, I could not but compare my

own state then with what it was before, and with earnest gratitude did I thank the Almighty for the great change which I felt had taken place in me,—a change which, though coming I knew wholly from Him, was yet instrumentally owing to her. The foundation of all my ideas was altered, and my soul was enlarged by continually dwelling in His presence who fills all space; and though even then, and for long after, my views of Christ's redemption were very clouded, still my heart was full of His love, while His joy made everything seem radiant about me.

When Bruce returned on board he seemed completely spirit-broken. I had not the heart to speak to him; but in the evening he went with me into our berth, saying he must talk to me.

"It is very odd," he exclaimed, after having sat some time in silence, "that I should always come to you to pour out my miseries—you who are the cause of them! However, so it is!—I've tried to rouse myself from this horrible despondency, but it falls on me again and again, like dark, dark night. How wrong it is to love anything on this deadly earth as I love her whom I shall never see again! What a life this is! Oh! St. Clair, I don't know what's come over me—I feel sick to death. I cannot pray—I believe it is that which makes me so madly miserable,—I cannot even wish to be resigned; I can only feel a heavy longing to die. Life is so weary—so very, very weary!—Speak to me, St. Clair," he said at last impatiently, for I had been sitting by him, with a feeling as of guilt, unable to say one word, unable even to meet his eye, though I could not but watch his disturbed countenance—"speak to me, or I shall go mad. Can you find nothing to say—you—out of your detested store of insufferable happiness?"

"You know full well," I replied, "that it is that which chains my tongue and clogs my heart so that I dare not speak. What can I say, unless it be to beg you to implore of God to speak to you Himself, with His voice of comfort, and His strengthening grace."

"It is useless now," he murmured, as he grasped my hand; "I feel as if I could not go to Him now, there is such a tearing, distracting misery in what I feel. I should like to do something desperate,—rush out to deserts—throw myself from rocks—howl to the waves—shriek to the winds—anything that might relieve the fire and fury that rages within; while here I am, imprisoned where two strides carry me from wall to wall, surrounded by creatures who know as little of the torments I endure, as the gull in the shrouds, or the porpoise under the keel. You too—the only one I can speak to—the only one who *could* feel as I feel—what care you about it? You are separated, you'll say—

but only for a moment;—in heart you are one, and soon in fate."

"I cannot bear to see you in this state," I exclaimed; "yet you must know, Bruce, how almost impossible it is for *me* to speak of comfort."

"Oh! I know it—I know it, my good fellow!" he replied, swinging himself restlessly backwards and forwards. "Then why I, of all creation, was to be chosen to go on shore with her! I, who never on any occasion wish to 'be in the same boat' with that fellow. But he always contrives to do everything he shouldn't."

"It was a mark of favour, so you must not quarrel with him for that," I replied; marvelling that his mind in the midst of all its agonies could stop to make a joke.

"And then—couldn't I have drowned him in the harbour! there was something so insufferable in his manner towards her. I feel, of course, a great deal about her liking you best, but that is all right and natural; and I will say for you, that you 'bear your honours so meekly,' that few but such a wretchedly irritable fellow as I am could be angry with you. But there was something in that man's manner towards her to-day, that was beyond all sufferance. He had I fancy, got encouragement from the old General's pressing invitations; and there was a triumph in his deep, dark eye as he turned to her, and said in a low voice—though I caught his words: 'I shall hope that my visits will be as acceptable to Miss Sydney as to her father'—for which I could have slain him! I expected he would have been miserable, and had been giving him all the pity I could spare from myself. But not a bit of it! He seemed quite a changed being after the old man's civil speeches, and when away from your basilisk presence."

"I had observed something of that manner of his on board," I replied; "and would that the time were come when I might free Mary from such harassment! I wonder the old General doesn't give leave for our engagement to be known. However, ere very long I trust it will be more than an engagement."

"I pray God sincerely," said Bruce, "that you may not have trouble yet, before you get into port. That fellow is bent on mischief—I am sure of it, and will leave no stone unturned to throw you over, and put himself in your place. He's capable of anything in my opinion. Now do let me abuse him,"—seeing I was about to interrupt him; "it is the only thing that does me good just now. I must hate—or love—and anything but that!"

"But I cannot let you say what I am sure is not so," I replied. "I've no spare love to spend on our Captain, as you may suppose; but though a hard and selfish man, I believe

him to be as far above a dishonourable action as any one in creation."

"Ay, anything that his dictionary explains as dishonourable perhaps. But could any one with only a quarter of an eye, not have perceived that you and Miss Sydney were engaged? Do you suppose that the coxswain and powder-monkey didn't see it?—that the pigs and chickens did not see it? Never tell me that that man of the lynx eye didn't see, and smell, and taste, and hear, and feel it! Why was the old General always near enough, and never too near? Why were you the only one to talk with her by the hour together, and soothe her when sad tears would sometimes flow? In your innocence I suppose you thought yourselves unperceived—alone in a desert! But let me tell you that one divinity amid a thousand worshippers does not love or weep unnoticed. No! St. Clair, depend upon it, your 'secret' is thoroughly known by the whole ship's crew, and I may say, as thoroughly respected—save and except by one; and that one—I say it again and again—would, and will—you'll see—do all that man or fiend can do to get her from you."

"Well! I have no apprehension. 'Faythe hathe no feare,' as the old motto says; and my faith is as firm in her love as in my own, and no shadow of fear can cross that."

"Oh! I don't fear her changing," said Bruce, gloomily. "Married, or not married, she'll never love but you!—I wonder why there is so much misery in the world!"

"It puzzles me often," I replied; "but thinking does not help one to an answer. We shall know it all by-and-by, and see it all to have been right."

"Providence is dark in its permissions; yet one day, when all is known, The universe of reason will acknowledge how just and good they were."

A few years, Bruce, and all these stirring commotions of our souls will be at rest; that thought often stills the throbbings of my heart. Don't let us forsake our true comfort, and our true Comforter will never forsake us. Raise your heart but for one moment to His high and tranquil presence, and all these tumults and miseries will subside into 'a great calm.' Try it, my good fellow, it never fails. Think of the words of God which you read first in this very place; and remember how fully then He took the 'trouble from your heart.'"

"That is true," he said, as he leant his head upon his hand; "and thank you for reminding me of it. Yes! God is the very source of peace, and the further we swerve from Him, the more are—and justly—troubled; but for a time the old habit of—
—and feeling got the better of me. Yes! this trial, as pass away—at least with life!—while the blessed

things I have learnt of late will last for ever—There! they are calling you; go up, I'll come soon."

I answered the call, and soon after Bruce followed me. The cloud had passed from his heart, and inward peace shone out again from his clear blue eye.

"It is wonderful certainly," he said, as he joined me and we walked on deck together, "what a change takes place in one's internal life, when one really rises to the presence of God. There is a lightness about one then, body and soul, which makes one seem to go buoyantly over the things of earth, as if they were powerless to move or arrest one. I feel now like the diver who has cut away the weights which kept him down, and who has sprung up to light and free air again. There is indeed 'no limit unto prayer.'"

We had passed the bluff South Foreland, and those traitorous sands, rich with the spoil of thousands! and went gallantly on before a fresh breeze, which brought us quickly to our destination. A few days after, the ship was paid off, and I found myself on the road to Dover.

CHAPTER XVII.

Where the green waters roll'd their waves,
And free winds fann'd thy cheek—blue Alps—
The morn—nature—and starry skies—
These were the nurses of our love!

C. L.

THE old road to Dover! A road travelled generally without many romantic feelings, merely as one of the great mediums of communication between London and—the world! Yet not all the roads in existence can present to the mind worldly recollections like that! What various floods of mighty interest have swept along its course! The armies of the glorious Roman, and those of our second conqueror, thronged and trampled down the way. The gallant victors of Cressy and of Agincourt, with their high chivalry and belted knights, all passed along it; and thousands of great, and brave, and noble hearts have year after year swelled the mighty list of those who have swept along its course, till the hand of Fame points to *him* who left his country an almost unknown and an untitled man, and who returned at

last with the ducal coronet on his brow, and a name whose glorious renown was borne from "Indus to the Pole!"

I could not but think of those things, as I passed along—of the many wondrous sights which those silent fields and unchanged hills and valleys had beheld, and I longed that some graphic pen should bring them all out in stirring life and bright reality before the mind.

It was yet early summer, and the leaves by the roadside were still in their brightest green; the air was soft, and I was very happy! Yet as I got near my journey's end,—spite of my impatience to see those from whom but a short half-hour now separated me, I could willingly have paused a moment to admire the scene which, on turning the hill near Dover, presented itself: the rich wooded valley, with the sea beyond—and further still the high white cliffs of France, on the left, the vast outline of the fine old castle crowning the hill, and on the right the heights and batteries of the Fortification. Accustomed as my eye had been so long to the glories of the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Apennines—I could not yet see without delight these humbler beauties of my native isle.

Arrived at Dover, I soon found out my mother's house. She was at home, and I flew into her arms with a joy till then unknown. My feelings towards her were so different from what they had ever been before, that I could hardly believe that she was the same mother as formerly, or that I was the same son who had left her three years previously with so much indifference. I found her looking no older than before, and her happiness in seeing me seemed unbounded. She could but weep for joy; for the affectionate style of my late letters, and the pleasure I showed at being with her again, satisfied at length the deep love which had been so continually pained and disappointed before, and made her feel that I was now indeed a son. How I grieved when she afterwards told me how unhappy my indifference had made her! How I mourned over the thought that her solitary life had been a sad and sorrowing one, not only from having lost the love of the dead, but from having missed the love of the living; and how thankful was I, that time was still left me in which I might prove my repentance, and show the joy that I had in cheering her, and making the remainder of her life pass joyously by!

It is the phraseology of books to talk of "youth" and "tenderness" as almost synonymous terms; and I have heard it

said, "Where are we to look for consideration, if not in the young?" In the old—decidedly in the old. In the young last of all. In all natures, the seeds of tenderness are sown, for all natures retain somewhat of the image of God,—most tender—most compassionate! and in some few they seem indeed the chosen plants of the soil. But in most, they have their place only in common with pride and selfishness and wilfulness, and above all, thoughtlessness; and these last, often for a time, spring so rank and strong, that they crush, if they cannot wholly destroy the other more gentle occupants of the soil. Experience it is which oftenest teaches the heart to feel; when we have suffered, then we know what suffering is, and can feel for it in others, and watch to alleviate it. With me indeed, by a blessed exception, it was the sense of happiness, the hand of love which had opened the heart-stores of feeling, but it is not often so. Some in their infancy have those around them so gentle and so wise, that from their own small stock of infant griefs they are taught to sympathize in the griefs of others;—from the loss of bird or flower, to estimate the heavier sorrows of the human breast. But healthy, happy children, without this teaching, know not, and think not of these things. They are blithe as the bee, light as the wind, and the voice of suffering, if heard, is not understood by them.

Such had been the case with me. My father and mother had been devotedly attached to each other, and had lived so almost exclusively for each other, that even I, though an only child, never for a moment interfered with their mutual devotion. I was greatly beloved, and the object of their fondest care, and was always with them; but I was never, that I recollect, much talked to or instructed by either of them. I was their bird, their butterfly, their joy—a thing to dance around them, or run by their side, or fly gaily before them,—but nothing else. Filled with each other, I seemed more as an addition, an ornament to their happiness, than an integral portion of it. I was gay, and had scarcely a temptation to outward sin, for my cheerfulness made me easily contented and their boundless kindness supplied my every want and pleasure. The best of everything was always given to me. The brightest and sunniest spot in all the garden was selected for my operations, instead of the dark nook, over-shaded by trees and matted with roots, which is usually appor-tioned to such youthful gardeners, selected with the view, it would seem, of disgusting them betimes with the labours of floriculture, or initiating them early in the charms of disappointment!

Often would I find fresh playthings I had never thought of perhaps, by my side; and Fortunatus's cap scarce brought its

wearer the objects of his wishes with greater promptitude than the least of mine was gratified by the active love of my parents. It was now the bleat of a young lamb, now the low cooing of a dove, or the cheerful song of a favourite bird, that would rouse me up in the pleasant summer days—ephemeral wishes perhaps, of the dreamy evening before, brought as a sweet surprise to greet my waking eyes! Yet I never thought of the love which provided them, nor was I taught to do so; I kissed my thanks—was enchanted, and flew away to enjoy—my playthings and—myself.

At length a dark and dreary change took place. An almost sudden illness stretched my poor father in his coffin, and my mother was from that hour a stricken being. I wept for my own loss, for I loved my father dearly; but of my mother's loss in him I never thought, and she was too sweet and feeling to remind me of it. Thrown now first upon each other for everything at this dismal time, we found how little we could suffice each other, and felt our loneliness the more. We had been together as a loving mother and a happy child, but as companions—never. The intercourse of mind between us had been nought; and we could not begin it now, when the only themes would have been suffering and grief. Her tears distressed me because they made *me* feel sorry and unhappy; but they never suggested to me the idea that I might lighten *her* sorrow and soothe *her* unhappiness.

After sitting by her perhaps, for a while, in embarrassed silence, or standing with my arm round her neck as she pressed me to her poor heart and wept over me tears of unutterable anguish, I would make any little excuse for going away, and gladly avail myself of her permission to run out and amuse myself; and I felt as if a weight of lead were off my spirits when the door closed, and I was free and alone again. Yet, sad for myself, I would often sit down on the stump of some old tree, or in my garden-barrow, and weep for *my* loss in him who had so often shared my pleasant labours with me, for *my* loss was great!

Had any one at that time spoken to me of my mother's sufferings and shown me how to act so as to make her happier, or told me only how to show the love I really had for her, I am sure that I should gladly have listened, and have felt a child's eager pleasure in the thought of being of use to her; and I can never forget my sensations when Mary's blessed hand, in our very first conversation, touched this string. How instantly my heart responded to it! and what an agony of self-reproach flashed over me, as she said: "How sad she must be, living all alone!" But no such hand or such voice was near me in my childhood; and I was left in the untutored selfishness of a

thoughtless, but not loveless, nature, to follow the wild dictates of each passing fancy.

The reserve between me and my mother seemed continually to increase at that time, till seeing, I suppose, that I was not happy, and feeling perhaps, that she knew not how to make me so, she asked me one day if I should like to go to school. I felt my whole being brighten at the thought, and I answered with a joyful "Yes!" She burst into tears!

I remember wondering at the time, what could make her do so; but I can understand it now, fully.

Well! I went to school: *that* was not the place to learn feeling, especially towards a mother! I then went to sea—a not much better place, though perhaps a shade. But Mary's blessed hand opened my heart to all love.

My now dear mother and I had not been many minutes together at Dover before we spoke of her; and the joy I felt at hearing her praises of her was great indeed.

"She came to me," she said, "the very day of her arrival, feeling, as she told me with her little foreign accent and simplicity of manner, that she knew she should be welcome then for your sake, and hoped soon to be so for her own."

She was indeed most welcome from the first moment, for her own dear sake!

I could but hug my mother to my heart as she spoke of her, wondering too, at the change in my feelings towards her, so different from what they had ever been before.

"If you owe a daughter to me, my dearest mother," I exclaimed, "you owe a son I am sure to her, for I feel that till now I never loved you as I ought, or valued enough your love to me. Now, it seems the crown and seal of all my happiness—and I am so happy! But where are they living—for the General told me they had not yet settled on a house?"

"Next door."

"Next door! Oh! I must go then."

"I think you had better stay just now," she replied, quietly.

I was about to feel vexed and impatient, as of old, when I detected a little smile on my mother's lips; and following the direction of her eye, I saw Mary herself coming in at the little gate of the garden. She looked up and nodded smilingly at seeing my mother at the window; but she did not see me.

The sensations that filled my mind at that moment are ill to be defined. Simple, boundless happiness at the sight of that ever-beloved countenance was the first feeling; but the next was troubled—I know not what to call it, for language is poor in fol-

lowing sensations, especially when they are of a mixed and contradictory kind, like those which then rushed through my mind. How shall I express them?

Hitherto our intercourse had been such as was congenial to a love so pure, so true, so devoted as ours; and the tinge of romance which had accompanied it had added not a little to its charm. We had met in the flame, and parted on the flood; and all our intermediate intercourse had been accompanied by refined and elevating associations. Her own bright skies, flowers, trees, light, shade, the fresh breeze, the rolling waters!—nature, in all her purest beauty and highest sublimity, had till then surrounded us when together; and exquisite as the thought of her must ever have been to me under all circumstances, still its charm had been undoubtedly enhanced by the framework of enchanting, extrinsic beauty, which had ever surrounded her image in my mind.

Now, she was on the Marine Parade of a fashionable watering-place! Feathers, and flowers, and frills, and flounces, fluttered on the walk, and ceaseless groups were sauntering up and down. I don't mean to abuse people who walk in such places—I have walked in them myself, though never much liking them; and doubtless many good and amiable beings were amongst those who were there that day enjoying the sea-air and the sight of their fellow-creatures. But yet . . . Oh! if on that moonlit night off Port Mahon, I had, as I remembered doing,

“Wish'd that little isle had wings,
And we within its fairy bowers
Were wafted off to seas unknown,”

how much more did I now wish to fly with her from all that noise and bustle of the world which had such a *désenchantant* effect upon my mind. A miserable sort of feeling seemed to chill my heart, as if *my* Mary were lost to me for ever!

My mother seeing I did not fly down to meet her, as she naturally expected I should, said, in much surprise,—

“Will you not open the door for her, Wilfred? We dispense with knocking here.”

Roused in a moment from my brief, painful reverie, I rushed down stairs, and was again in her presence. Then, Parade, feathers, flounces—all had vanished from my mind, and Mary was again, as ever—*my* Mary.

After a while I left her with my mother, and went to see the old General. Though but a few days had elapsed since I had seen him, I thought I observed a considerable change. He com-

plained much of the glare and noise of the place, and seemed so dissatisfied with everything about him, that I began to feel quite guilty at having been the means of persuading him to come there. But at last, on mentioning my mother, he started into all his old vivacity of manner, and launched forth in her praise in a way that set my mind quite at ease, saying that her being there made up for everything else, and that he felt quite happy to think that when he was gone, his child would have a friend and mother, so wise, and kind, and good; "one who would take much more care of her," he added, good-humouredly, "than her harum-scarum son would ever do."

We dined together of course every evening, and in the mornings too we were always together; but still it was scarcely the same as before.

Dover was not in those days what it is now. The ground now covered by handsome houses between the Parade and the pier was then a rope-walk, while the Castle cliffs were visible from base to crown, never dreaming that the temerity of man would lead him—as it has since done—to seek his dwelling by their rugged sides and beneath their beetling brows. The Marine Parade houses were therefore the only ones for visitors which faced the sea, and the publicity of the situation was very disagreeable, it being impossible to leave one's house without coming into the midst of whatever of bustle and gaiety the place afforded. We knew not a soul there, happily; but still we craved for loneliness and quiet. I could not but see that Mary was much admired; and though that was gratifying to my vanity and affection, yet altogether it grated on my feelings, and kept me in a state of irritation to which I was little inclined by nature. Hitherto had Mary's

"Face and mind,
Like holy mysteries lain enshrined;"

and though the observations that I overheard were of course complimentary, they were still often too familiarly worded to suit the deep respect that accompanied every feeling of my heart towards her. On board our ship she had indeed been among admiring men; but they had all regarded her with absolute veneration, and she had trod the deck as a creature who seemed to be of a higher order than the rough but manly spirits by whom she was surrounded.

And yet Dover was beautiful! And when we got into the country—far as it was before we could get there—or mounted the Castle hill, or the western heights, or Shakspeare's Cliff—then it was real enjoyment! How magnificent was the view from those high places—taking in such a sweep of watery

waste ; and how pure and exhilarating the air, compared to what it was below in the valley ! I never mounted to them but a line I had met with somewhere came most animatingly into my mind :—

“ Sur les monts de la foi, l'air est toujours serein.”

(On the heights of faith, the air is ever serene.)

To call it a “ watery waste ” that we looked upon, was, however, a great injustice. If the Dover road was, as I have said, the most storied of all those that scar the face of the earth, so were the rushing waters that divided us but by a few short miles from our “ natural friend ”—the most abundant of all old Ocean's domains in recollections, activity, and importance. From the moment that the Phœnician first sought us as the “ Cassiterides,” to the time when I was looking on their sparkling surface, the waters of our Channel have ever been fraught with enterprise, whether of commerce, of science, or of warlike exploit !

That wondrous Power too, which has since made silent and solitary the highway of the Roman, was just at the period of which I am speaking, beginning to display its mighty force upon the waters ; and in addition to the flags of all nations, and sails of all kinds which ceaselessly occupied the busy winds, and drove the keel through the green waves of the Channel, were now to be traced the arrow-like motion and diverging wake of the “ steamer,” forcing its way against wind and tide, and floating its long *panache* of smoke and steam far down upon the wind.

In point of beauty it is not of course to be compared to any sailing vessel ; but its strenuous, majestic, self-impelling action, is magnificent ! The things which retard vessels which are dependent upon outward influences, have but little effect on them ; and they rush on against wind, against tide, unswerving from their course, and outstripping all around them, with a fearlessness of self-will, which it fills one with energy and courage merely to behold.

We were observing them one morning, as several having waited for the tide came rushing out one after the other from the harbour—each of them, the moment it had passed the pier and got free of the bar, separating its course from the others, and darting like an arrow to the point of its particular destination ; and we were struck by their being so true an emblem of the Christian—actuated by a power *in* them, but not *of* them ; and, uninfluenced by outward circumstances, going tranquilly but boldly forward in the path assigned, never turning back or stopping till they had reached the ‘ haven where they would be.’

Ah! it was delightful to have such things before one's eyes, and such thoughts within one's heart! and for hours together did we sometimes watch untired the beauty of that tranquilly busy scene; and spite of the first painful impression that it gave me, and the continual unpleasantness of having to live so much *en evidence* during our short stay at Dover—ininitely precious and delightful are the recollections which embalm its memory to me!

Beyond the Castle jetty, however, we found almost perfect solitude. The cliffs too, were so fine there; and when the tide was out, the vast extent of low rocks, almost wholly covered with sea-weed, formed, by their rich hues of purple and green, a beautiful relief and contrast to the cold white colouring of the chalky heights above. How we used to enjoy ourselves on those rocks—walking over the miniature crags,—intersected by numbers of tiny streams running their clear shining courses in every direction, and forming each its own little ravine, whose sides were either clad with the brightest verdure, or cut into little “fjords” and headlands, perfect in their miniature beauty! And not only did Mary and I enjoy them, but my mother also would often be tempted there by our glowing descriptions of the “romantic scenery” to be found; for her heart, long desolate and depressed under the weight of solitude and sorrow, seemed to have become quite young and buoyant again under the warm affection of her two children,—both, alas! equally new-found.

The old General did not attempt such venturous doings, but used to sit basking on the shore,—either occupying himself with some book, or dreamily watching the rippling of the waters. Indeed at no time of his life would such things have had charms for him. In youth he liked better the active bustle of the camp and court; and now, poor old man! he seemed to have but little enjoyment in anything. It is not age which takes away our love of simple pleasures when once it has existed—it outwears the mere lapse of years—it is only sorrow.

Notwithstanding, however, these maritime amusements of ours, we still sighed for perfect quiet and the country; and a pleasantly situated house in the neighbourhood, at Buckland, becoming vacant, it was agreed that we should take it jointly, and live there together for a few months. This was perhaps a primitive arrangement which might have seemed odd in the eyes of the world; but it seemed not so to us in our simplicity.

Then there came a period of happiness indeed, greater than I can describe.

England, it is true, has not the unspeakable charm, the heart-thrilling *prestige* which belong to foreign lands; but where shall we find the quiet, happy, tranquil feelings which her green hills

and exquisite gardens, her shady lanes, and meadows golden with the cowslip or buttercup, her glowing heaths and picturesque cottages, her little woody nooks, and stiles with overhanging trees, her still bright streams, and haze-softened distances, can produce? There is not much perhaps to elevate the heart, but all to tranquillize it; and tranquillity was all we wanted then—permission to enjoy the happiness that came from within.

The country there then just suited us. It was of that charming style which we call “rural.” Soft round hills looking quite into the distance down the long valleys; low copse-woods, and grass fields full of cowslips at first and then carpeted with all hues; clover-fields sending their pure scent abroad through the air; and, flowing swiftly and silently through the valley, the brightest stream that ever sparkled in the sun, whose waters were so clear that you would have hardly known them to be water but for their rippling eddies, and the added brightness which they gave to the long green water-weeds that waved and floated beneath their “*mobili cristalli*” (moving crystal). If inclined for far-off ramblings, we wandered about the sunny glades and swelling hills on the one side; or on the other, mounted the higher ground, and looked eastward through clumps of trees and over boundless meadows towards the Downs and onwards to the heights of Ramsgate, or back over the rich valley to the old Castle of Dover, with the cliffs of France stretching far beyond the line of dark-blue sea.

When it was too hot for walking, we used to sit out beneath some beautiful lime-trees which shaded the bottom of our sloping garden and overhung the clear stream which I have spoken of; and there Mary would bring her work or drawing, and I read or talked, or we sat in that still but active enjoyment of existence which is so charming! But, “*la position la plus douce a toujours son côté de souffrance—probablement pour qu'elle soit sanctifiée*” (the happiest fate has always its suffering side—probably that it may be sanctified); and the thing that did in some measure mar the animated peace of the joyful, thankful life which we were then leading, was the state of the poor old General, whose mind appeared evidently to fail, while his irritability increased to a fearful degree.

For a time we attributed his constantly talking of his poverty, and fretting lest he should at last be starved, to this weak state of intellect; but at length it really seemed as if he had some foundation for what he said, from great losses sustained by the burning of his house, and from other causes.

I shall never forget with what distress the first idea that Mary had to endure any privation smote upon my heart. We were sitting together under the lime-trees, then laden with their

fragrant blossoms, and the old man was near us, alternately dozing in his chair and waking up to make some querulous remark. Mary's usual occupation had been drawing, embroidering, or some other ornamental work, but this day she was doing something for her own use. I need not have been shocked, for the materials on which she was exercising her neat-handed skill were fine and delicate; but I was unused to see her so employed, and asked her what she was making.

"Some little cuffs," she replied; "are they not pretty?"

"Very; but why should you make them for yourself? Your maid is still with you."

"Yes! I could not part from her; we were children together, and we love each other so much. But you know we are not so rich as we used to be, and she has many other things to do now, so I find that I must do these little works, and many others, for myself; but the hardship is not very great to set little stitches in muslin and lace."

"Muslin and lace!" cried the old General, in a piteous voice, having between sleeping and waking caught his daughter's last words. "Muslin and lace! Ay, that is so like women! If they haven't bread to eat, still they must have their muslins and laces!—Mary, you'll ruin me if you go on in this way."

I looked at her, and the tears came fairly into my eyes, as with her angel smile she answered her father's irritating remark by saying,—

"This lace is not new, my father,"—for she always retained her foreign habit of so addressing him—"you have seen it before. When Giuletta di Mazini was married, it trimmed my bridesmaid's dress; and now I was making it into some of those little cuffs which you say you always like to see me wear."

This answer seemed but half to satisfy the old man, who continued his complaints in a low voice, murmuring about "muslin and lace," as if haunted by their spectral images.

Mary saw that it was best to say no more; and looked at me with that excusing smile, which a mother might have worn for a loved and wayward child.

The thought of her having any privation was, however, distracting to me; and not all her gay cheerfulness could reconcile me to seeing her gradually give up her favourite pleasures, her music, her painting, and lighter employments, to occupy herself with common necessary works; and as is often the case where folly is joined to affection, instead of cheering her through any difficulties she might have had, I often turned her joyous hours into sad ones, by irritable lamentations and bemoanings of her fate. For myself I felt I should not have cared for any labour undertaken for her, and was never perhaps in better spirits than

when, as she sat under the shade of the limes plying her busy needle, I worked close by at her little garden, weeding and training the flowers she loved so well; and then, hot and tired, threw myself on the grass by her side. But for her—I should have liked to have spread everything rich and beautiful that the world contained at her feet; and I suppose I should have gone on for ever tormenting myself and her because I could not do so, but for what I heard her one day say to my mother, when she thought I was far away. They were sitting together enjoying the soft summer air on the lawn, busily intent on their work; and as my feet fell silently *sur l'herbe veloutée* (on the velvet grass), they did not hear me approaching.

"Such poverty as this," I heard her say, "is rather animating than depressing,—supplying the stimulus of necessity to the pleasure of employment. I think I was never happier in my life; and if only my father were contented, and Wilfred would not make me unhappy by being so himself on my account, I should be only too joyful! What is poverty when I have his love? And it cannot take from me the blessing of God—the pleasures of nature."

"But have you no fears for the future?" asked my mother.

"Oh no," she replied; "the Word of Truth says 'My God shall supply all your need.' What therefore He does not supply may be my *fancy* but is not my *need* you know." And she looked up with a smile; and as she did so, caught sight of me as I stood silently behind my mother's chair, my heart full of deep emotion.

"Oh, Wilfred!" she exclaimed, in some embarrassment, "I did not know you were so near. However, you have got the listener's due, and heard no good of yourself."

"No, I have heard no good of myself," I replied, "but that which must do me good. And is it really I, Mary," I continued, as I took the chair my mother had left, I knew, for my use, "is it really I who am the source of discomfort to you—you, for whom I would gladly lay down my life—slave in the sun—work in the mines—do anything!"

"My dearest Wilfred, I thank you from my very heart," she replied, "but I don't want you to do all those great things for me; I only want you to do—what is perhaps after all a greater—to give up all anxiety for me, and let me be happy by seeing that you are so. I do assure you that if I saw you cheerful, I should be happier almost than I could bear."

"I know you would not deceive me, except to console me," I replied; "and though I have thought that you did that sometimes, yet what I have heard you say this moment to my mother has set my heart quite at rest. And can it be, Mary, that my

love makes up to you for poverty?" And I covered my face with my hands as millions of feelings flooded my breast.

She was silent; she knew she need not speak.

"Well then!" I continued after a moment, "I will be as happy as you. Yes! you are right in being so, for I am sure that no riches can be to us what the love of God and of each other is,—and no one can take that from us. You must try again and teach me 'live for the day,' as you have done so often before,—and who has such days as I have? But tell me, Mary, why should you be so particularly happy just now, when most others would be unhappy?"

"I can only feel it," she replied, "as a proof of God's love, who 'stays His rough wind in the day of the east wind,' and will not let it blow too chillingly upon me. He did not send me poverty till He had given me so much to make up for it; for, besides having you with me, have I not found a mother?"

From that time I strove really to do as I had said, and to "live for the day;"

"To watch time's moments, *felt* as they rushed by,"

and to enjoy the thousand blessings poured upon my happy path. It was long indeed before the seeds of all the bright things she had sown in my heart, sprung up; but from the time I am speaking of, I certainly began to obtain some little power over those depressions and fears which so dishonour God, and which rob us of the benefit of all the bright things which He gives us so richly to enjoy.

It was strange, that notwithstanding the sorrow with which I thought of Mary's sudden fall from riches to poverty, yet the idea of its interfering with our marriage never once occurred to me. The young, thank God! are not generally mercenary, for they know but little of the value of money; and some never become so, because, though they may learn its value, yet their minds are too elevated to be influenced by it, and they have found thousands of treasures—treasures of heart—of soul—which far, far outweigh it. Neither Mary nor I had ever been brought up to think of expense, and I am almost inclined to say—I am thankful for it,—it left our minds so free from all debasing considerations. Yet I do not think that either of us ever could have been made to value money otherwise than as a necessary means of living, and a blessed means of doing good. All we had ever wanted, had been supplied—we asked not whence, and cared not how. What therefore might have been a rational cause of fear, we were for a long time spared, and time therefore sped happily

by. But a dark cloud was hovering over us, that was soon to break in storms of trouble on our heads.

CHAPTER XVIII

When thus my — did daily dawn, how she lit up my world!—tingeing more rosily the roseate clouds, that—like those in her summer cheek—played to and fro, like clouds in Italian skies.—MARDI.

NOTHING had been heard of Captain Normanton for some time, though he had at first written to General Sydney, and spoken of visiting him as soon as his affairs would permit. But spring had ripened into summer, and the summer hues were beginning to be enriched with the warmer tints of autumn, yet still he came not; and several months having elapsed without his having even written again, we began to hope that he had, in the cooler moments of absence, felt it wisest and most honourable to pursue his object no further. Such, however, it soon appeared was not the case.

On one of those sultry days that we sometimes have at the beginning of September, I had been very busy in training up a jessamine which was a great favourite with us,—with Mary for the sake of its starry, fragrant flowers, and with me because it grew round the window of a little morning room where she would sit sometimes when she wished to be alone. Often had my voice from below called her to that window; and then she would look down upon me like—what she was—my guardian angel, and speak those ever gentle-words of cordial kindness which came so warm to my heart.

I had mounted a ladder that day to reduce to obedience some rambling shoots which had intruded too far upon her view; and it was a delight to me which I cannot describe, to lean on the outside of her window and talk to her as she sat in her own little room, surrounded by the thousand "*piccoli oggetti*" ("little adornments," more literally, "little objects") which—the more perhaps, because they contrast so much with our rougher minds and rougher habits—constitute a part of the charm which makes women "the poetry of human life."

There is certainly a great pleasure in anything a little out of the common way, and which helps to relax the cold formalities of "room-life;" and this very little *escapade* from general routine—the mere mounting a ladder and volunteering a piece

of rustic work with a light blouse on and a sailor's black ribbon superseding the choking neckcloth—and leaning and talking *into* a window instead of *out* of it—gave an animation to my spirits, which made them rise to the “heights of towering absurdity” which they had always of old inhabited, and from which they had seldom descended, till my once empty heart had become filled with higher sensations, making it almost “too happy to be gay,” and

“Mellowing earth's ruder noise
Of griefs and joys,”

by a delightful sense of present bliss, and by thoughts of

“Fairer scenes that never, never die.”

This is ever the effect of true and absorbing feeling; and I could scarcely call that affection “deep,” which did not produce this softening refinement of soul.

“Love is * * * *
An angel mind breathed into a mortal; though fallen,
yet how beautiful!
The devotion of the heart in all its depth and grandeur.”

Mary, as well as I, seemed to feel the pleasure of that moment; and she came to the window, and threw the sprigs of jessamine which I gathered for her down to my mother who was standing below, with childish amusement, looking as she did so, more like a creature of earth than I had ever seen her before; for there was generally an elevation in her countenance, and a depth of feeling in her full and most expressive eyes that stilled the more frivolous parts of one's nature, and filled the heart with happiness rather than with mirth. Yet there was no change but what embellished her; and though then she was so gay and light-hearted,

“Yet was there light around her brow,
A holiness in those dark eyes,
That show'd, though wandering earthward now,
Her spirit's home was in the skies.”

We were enjoying ourselves in this way in the exceeding gladness of our hearts, when the servant appeared at the drawing-room window which opened upon the lawn, and spoke to my mother. I did not hear what he said, but I guessed it by her answering, “General Sydney is there,” pointing to where the old man sat at a little distance, basking in the sun.

My heart suddenly ceased beating; for the servant, receiving

her answer and stepping out on the lawn, was followed by one whose figure I could not mistake—Captain Normanton. He bowed to my mother, and as he did so, I saw his eye glance up to the window where I was standing; but he evidently did not recognize me, and passed on. Mary saw him as well as I, and in sudden terror grasped my hand as if for protection, and shrunk back into the room, trembling from head to foot.

"Why should you be afraid of him?" I whispered; "he can do nothing to hurt you."

"I cannot tell," she replied; "but the sight of him fills me with dread."

"Nothing can separate us, dear," I said; "God, I am sure, will never let that be, so don't be afraid. Yet from my soul I wish he were anywhere but here. But I must go down, I suppose, and speak to him, or he will think it odd." And I ran down the ladder.

I advanced to meet him as he was walking towards the house with the General; and spite of the many reasons I had to deprecate his presence there, I could not but feel a sort of cordiality at again seeing my old commander. He was walking with his eyes bent on the ground—a habit of his that always gave a particularly unpleasant expression to his countenance—and he did not see me till I stopped before him and spoke. He started as if he had been shot; and looked at me with bewilderment and terror, as if I were a spectre crossing his path. All strength seemed for a moment gone from him, and his arms hung down by his side as if he had not power to raise one to shake the hand I held out to him.

"Mr. St. Clair!" at last he exclaimed, coldly giving me his hand, whilst the thunders of Erebus covered his brow,—“you here!”

"Yes," I replied, "I have been here for months—ever since we all left Dover. That lady whom you passed on the lawn was my mother."

He bowed stiffly, as if in acknowledgment of this piece of information: then glancing contemptuously at the hammer which I still held in my hand, he said,—

"If I mistake not, I saw you on the top of a ladder just now when I came in. I recognize the dress now, though of course I never dreamed of looking for you in such a position. Your talents seem of a versatile order."

"Oh! everything is pleasant under some circumstances," I replied; "I was training the jessamine round Miss Sydney's window there."

His eye as I said this, darted up like lightning to the spot, where at that moment the back of Mary's head with its coils of

glossy hair was just visible as she stood in the middle of the room.

His cheek had been pale as death till that moment, but then the purple flood rushed up. His lip trembled, and his nostril quivered as the quick breath came and went; and a suffusion of such tenderness swept over his generally harsh brow and cold stern eye, that my heart was pained to the quick. He put up his handkerchief to conceal his agitation; but I had turned away, and begun to busy myself in some occupation befitting my new character of gardener, that he might not know I had observed him, leaving him and the General to proceed by themselves to the house.

"Are Mrs. St. Clair and her son living with you?" I heard him ask in a low voice. "Rather an odd arrangement is it not, my dear sir?"

"Is it?" said the old man, rather in alarm. "We met Mrs. St. Clair at Dover, and she was very kind, and he, you know—"

They stepped off the silent grass, and the sound of their feet on the gravel walk drowned the rest of the sentence. From the few words, however, which reached me, I felt convinced that a storm of trouble was brewing, and that our hitherto cloudless horizon would not be suffered to remain so much longer.

My heart sunk within me; the cold determination of Captain Normanton's manner, and the evident power he possessed over the weakened mind of the old General, sending the same nameless terror into my soul that had so overcome Mary. I stood spell-bound almost, watching them till they entered the house.

The drawing-room bell rang, I felt confident for the servant to tell Mary to come down. I threw away my hammer and hastened into the house by another door, for I was resolved that she should not have to go alone into that room, or be obliged to endure without support Captain Normanton's displeasing manners, wishing too, that he should see by the allowed intimacy of our habits that we must be engaged, for I could not but feel convinced that if thoroughly assured of that, he had yet honourable feeling enough to make him withdraw from the hopeless contest.

I rushed up-stairs, and hearing my mother's voice in Mary's sitting-room, asked if I might come in. Permission being granted I went in, when I found my mother with nervous agitation of manner, talking to Mary.

"Do, my dear Wilfred," she said, "try and give some courage to this poor coward heart. I cannot think why she should be so alarmed at the sight of Captain Normanton. He will soon be gone; and his visit, poor man, will do him more harm than any one else."

"It is very foolish," said Mary, who was looking as pale as

death, "but I cannot help it. Dear Wilfred, you remember on your first visit to us, how frightened you said I looked, when I thought it was he who was coming, and it is much worse now. No one can know how really fearful his presence is to me, and how insupportable his way of speaking."

"Dearest Mary," I said, kneeling by her, trying to soothe her, "don't give way to this fear. I will go down with you, and be near you, and then he cannot be disagreeable, and he must soon be gone."

She rose from her chair. "I will try and get the better of this foolish fear," she said; "but when with him I cannot help feeling as a miserable bird in the presence of a rattlesnake."

"In this free land," I said smiling, "you need fear no constraint, Mary. And who is there would use it—not your father?"

"Oh no!" she replied. "And yet Captain Normanton seems to have so much power over him, and he never seems the same in his presence as when away from him—he whom I thought too spirited to be quelled by any one."

The remembrance of the General's manner just before when passing me in the garden, rushed back to my thoughts, and really for a moment quite sickened me; and Bruce's warning also recurred strongly to my mind. However, I would not say anything that could increase Mary's fears, so answered with a crazy attempt at gaiety,—

"Do you imagine that that well-made boot hides so very cloven a foot—or that that perfect coat smoothes down the wings of Apollyon? No! I don't think he is quite so redoubtable a foe as that. So now, my dearest, you shall come down; for I fear your father will be vexed at any want of courtesy to him."

When we opened the drawing-room door, we found the General with his hand on the lock, just coming to call her.

"Ah! you're here at last," he said with considerable irritation; "I thought you were never coming. Where have you been?"

"We were up-stairs," I answered for her.

Captain Normanton bit his lip—I should have thought to the blood—but quickly commanding his countenance, he advanced to meet Mary; while, as he observed her timid air, and watched her varying colour, there was a smile on his curled lip, and a sarcastic, defying expression on his countenance which was scarcely to be endured.

I went up to him, and, with as much courtesy as I could command, began talking of our old shipmates and of other matters. But he was evidently anything but pleased at the interruption, and soon rising, proposed going out into the garden. So we went out, and sat under the shade of the lime-trees.

He was in deep mourning ; his father, he had told the General, had died some months before, and the attendance on his sick-bed—for he had been an excellent son—and the vast quantities of business he had had on coming into his property, was what had occasioned his long delay in paying his promised visit to Dover. We all sat together in uncomfortable constraint, till at length luncheon was announced—prodigious blessing at that moment—and we returned to the house.

As we passed near Mary's window, against which my ladder was still resting, I said to her,—

“I must finish that for you to-morrow, Mary.”

Captain Normanton started at hearing me address her in that familiar way, and turned round fiercely towards me, softening his angry look however to a bitter smile, as he said in an ironical tone,—

“England is still, I perceive, as it always was, a land of liberty.”

“All lands should be such,” I replied, “where we merely claim our rightful privileges.”

Our eyes met and flashed defiance. I saw that he understood me ; and the rage that glared from beneath his suddenly contracted brow was frightful.

We reached the house where we found my mother waiting for us. Captain Normanton was introduced to her ; and her kindly heart feeling for his painful position, she was particularly attentive and amicable towards him. Nothing however could rouse him into conversation ; he seemed to have the weight of worlds at his heart, and the whole thing appeared insupportable to him. At length he rose to go, saying that he hoped some early day to be able to return and pay them another visit.

Our eyes again met, but it was my brow that lowered now ; his countenance had resumed its smiling contempt. He took his leave, mounted his horse, and rode away. The door closed upon him, and we all took a long breath of relief.

The General seemed afraid that we might have observed that he did so, and that it might have appeared ungrateful in him ; so he began,—

“He is a very gentlemanlike person, that Captain Normanton, and has been very kind to us. I am afraid his visit was but a dull one. Mary, you didn't talk at all. And why did you stay away so long ? It was very uncivil of you.”

She seemed at a loss what to say, so made up for her want of words by stooping down and kissing him.

“Ah, that's all very well, but when I send for you another time, you must come directly ; and I insist on your being more attentive to Captain Normanton. You were never very civil to

him, even on board his ship, and when he was doing all in his power to please you; but I desire that you will try to be more agreeable to him, at least in your father's house. It is very kind, I am sure, of any one to take notice of us at all now when we are so poor, and do not know how we shall get on at all."

And so he rambled on, poor old man, talking of starvation and Captain Normanton, and extravagance and economy, till my mother, as a relief, proposed our taking a walk—and we did so.

It was a heavy burden to her to have continually to keep up his spirits and bear with his wearisome wanderings over the same subjects for ever, but her love for me, and for Mary too, made her cheerfully endure it; and in time, as she told me, she really used not to hear him as he murmured, and would answer "Yes," or "No," at random, which she said did always perfectly well.

One would have had more compassion for the weakness of his mind, had his violence of temper weakened with it; but his irritability increased as his intellect decayed, and this day Mary's spirits for the first time seemed to sink under it, and as we were sitting together after our walk, her tears streamed down uncontrollably. It was not solely on her father's account however; her mind was oppressed by the remembrance of Captain Normanton's visit. His apparently unchanged feelings towards herself, and his looks of dire enmity whenever I crossed his path, filled her with an alarm, which for a time quite overbore all her bright hope and faith; and with sad forebodings did she look forward to a long term of trouble and trial ere the time should come when she might, as she said, in her union with me find "peace, and tranquillity, and joy."

CHAPTER XIX.

Of by a flower or leaf, in some loved book,
We mark the lines that charm us most : retrace
Thy life ;—recall its loveliest passage ;—look,
Dead violets keep the place !

SIR E. BULWER LYTTON.

"Sorrow endureth for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." How often is this true ! The wearied overwrought mind sees things, as night approaches, with its dark shadow on them ; but the morning light, bringing with it its countless mercies, re-animates the spirits, and makes them rise the higher in their joy for having cast off the care which had weighed too heavily on them before.

Never did Mary seem happier or more joyous than the next morning, when at my call beneath her window she looked out bright as the morn itself. When she came down, and we had time to converse together, she told me how grieved she had been at the sinful, faithless state of her soul the night before, and how the sense of her weakness had driven her to God for fresh strength and comfort, and how she had found it, and trusted never again to let it be wrested from her. She said she still thought it likely that she might have trouble and annoyance from Captain Normanton ; but that she was sure that God would smoothe her way, and strengthen her failing heart.

How happy we were that day, and my garden-hammer sent forth as ringing and cheerful a sound when it gave its last stroke, as when it struck its first, in defence of discipline and authority. The rebellious jessamine was now reduced to perfect order and subjection, and "through cloudiest green, radiated its star-like flowers" round Mary's window in fresh beauty and brightness. She praised my skill in my new office ; and said that if only the branches of a passion-flower which grew on another part of the house could twine their blossoms with that of the jessamine, her window would be perfect.

It was impossible to effect that of course ; but by the very break of day the next morning, I was walking across the dewy meadows, and through the dusty lanes to a nursery-garden near Dover, where some little time before I had seen some of the plants she coveted in full blossom. I chose one, and carried it off in triumph, as well as a nosegay of flowers for my mother.

The plant was heavy, and the sun was hot, but I was never

less tired with a walk in my life, the morning air was so exhilarating, and my heart bounding with happiness. I was glad to find all still quiet in the house when I returned, and without losing a moment I mounted the ladder, which I had purposely left against the wall the night before, with my plant in hand; and having contrived to screen the pot among the thick foliage of the creepers which grew there, I trained the branches of the plant so as to form a fringe all round the lower part of the window. I had chosen one which had several flowers in full bloom on it, but as they always close at night, and wait for the heat of the sun before they expand themselves, they were still shut up in their green cases when I had finished my work; and I cannot say with what childish impatience I looked at them, after I had descended from my ladder, anxious that they should be in their full beauty when Mary came to take her morning view of the world from her favourite spot. I watched them and watched them, as if it had been the light of my eyes that they needed to make them open; till remembering my nosegay, I ran into the house to arrange it. I put it into a vase of water and placed it on the breakfast-table, and then rushed back to see if my flowers had done anything wonderful in my absence. They had indeed! The sun had just overtopped some trees which shaded the house, and had poured its hot beams on the blossoms which were so ready to receive them; and there they stood, like glorious suns themselves, yet with unenvious beams, allowing the soft stars of the jessamine to shine beside them.

I called to Mary; it was just eight o'clock—her usual hour, for we were both early risers—and stood below waiting for her, for I feared to lose her first look of glad surprise when she should see her new-blown favourites beneath her window. At last she came, and was gaily returning my morning salutation, when her eye caught sight of them.

“Oh, Wilfred!” she exclaimed.

She looked at me; and reading somewhat of their history in my eyes, she bent over them, and a suffusion of extreme emotion rushed over her countenance.

I flew up the ladder, and was by her side in an instant. She seemed more touched than I could have thought at so slight a mark of love, and bent her softened eyes on the purple glory of the flowers.

“Do you like them, Mary?” I asked.

“Like them! Oh, Wilfred! I never liked anything half so much.” And she raised her loving eyes to mine with an expression that choked me. I could not speak a word.

"Oh!" she continued; "you might have done many a great thing that would not have melted my heart as this remembrance of a little passing wish has done. I can never forget it! All blessed happiness will now be associated in my mind with this flower,—Christ's love, God's love, and yours; and, best of all, the power to feel and to return them."

"Is loving, then, a greater happiness to you than being loved?" I asked, my voice still trembling with emotion.

"Ah, surely!" she replied. "When we love, every pleasure to those we love is a pleasure to us; all we can do for them is joy. One could work unseen, unknown, by night and day, and be fully repaid by their enjoyment. It is so blessed to love!"

"I believe you could, Mary," I replied, "for your nature is near akin to God's, who does 'all for love, and nothing for reward.' But I doubt whether my feelings are so amiable: I could not love long, I think, without return."

"You have never been tried," she answered gently; "but even had you been, I do not think you would ever have failed in kindness."

She began arranging some of the leaves of the plant, and turned one of the blossoms towards her so as fully to see its beauty.

"I don't know how to thank you enough," she began again; "these *petites surprises*—these little thoughtfulnesses show so much affection, and create so much. But where did you get it? And how have you managed it so well?"

"I got it at Johnson's garden this morning; and this is how I have managed it." And putting some of the leaves aside, I showed her how I had arranged it.

"And did you bring that great plant all the way yourself? How tired you must be!"

"No, not at all," I replied. "Carrying it for you, Mary, made me feel like 'Paul' when carrying 'Virginie,'—'*comme si j'avais les ailes d'un oiseau*' (as if I had the wings of a bird). I brought a nosegay, too, for my mother."

"I am so glad of that," she exclaimed; "I must go down and see how pleased she will be."

"I will join you soon," I said. And I raced down my ladder, and went to change my dusty clothes.

When I went into the breakfast-room I found no one there but Mary. She had re-arranged the flowers with much better taste in the vase, and put them opposite my mother's place, and had gone into the garden and gathered some others to make a wreath round her plate. She had just completed her fragrant

labours when I entered, and she called me joyously to come and admire her handiwork. How could I do otherwise?

“All she did seemed still well done to me;”

and she had in perfection the feminine and exquisite art of adorning everything she did by the feeling and taste with which she did it.

Oh! I could dwell upon that time for ever! It may seem puerile in a man who has reached “*il mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*,” (the half of the journey of our life), to remember such things at all; but I fancy the best wisdom our age can teach us, as far as the things of this world go, is to retain as nearly as we can, the simple joys and feelings of our youth. Our blessed Lord has said, “Except ye become as little children, ye cannot see the kingdom of God;” and with equal truth, I think, it may be said, that the nearer we approach in manhood to the pure tastes and simple pleasures of our first fresh years, the more fully we become inheritors of the earth also.

I have been in stirring scenes enough; in tempests and warfare, and that of the bloodiest kind—hand to hand with pirates of the East, or, a thousand times worse, the devilish slave-dealers of the West; but I cannot say, that from the moment I washed the foul stain of their ruffian blood off my hands to the present hour, I have ever had one moment's satisfaction in retracing those scenes of horror, or have ever voluntarily turned back to that frightful page of memory. Grief too, unspeakable! and the throes of fearful passions, and wild, thrilling joys,—all these I have known—oh! too well known! but not even to the last—to the overpowering joy—does my mind turn with half the pleasure that it does to those happy times when my spirit was so calm that the slightest breath woke it into brightness, and made it reflect the light of heaven in a thousand ways. “I could not fathom the depths of my own happiness; I could but float upon its sunny stream.”

It is the little things of life and love that “bring all paradise into our heart,” which, stretching out their tendrils on every side, cling round our memory till they become a part of our very selves. Yes! true is his “Philosophy,” who says:—

“Thou art wise, and shalt find comfort if thou study thy pleasure in trifles;

For slender joys often repeated fall as sunshine upon the heart;
The streams of small pleasures, fill the lake of happiness.”

The recollections of that day have never faded from my heart, nor have they ever been recalled without bringing with them somewhat of their first happiness, "embalmed, not buried," in my memory. They were so true to Nature—so simple, yet so full of life and happiness! Greater things are often swept away by Time's rushing waters; but these golden sands of life sink too deep into the stream for its waves to reach or to disturb them!

I could but praise Mary for the beauty of her arrangement; and just as she had stolen one of Summer's last roses from the nosegay, to place by the side of her father's plate, he entered. My mother followed, and, charmed by the flowers and the love of her children, her kind eye beamed dearer love upon us than ever.

When breakfast was over, the General was led forth by Mary to see the wonderful plant that had emulated "Jack's beanstalk" with such success in its night's progress; and, in particular good humour, the old man sang my praises as if he thought I had invented the flower as well as put it there.

I then told Mary I had a little favour to ask of her, which was to let me go into her sitting-room, and look at all the *roba* with which it was adorned. She readily granted my request, and we all adjourned there, when my mother and the General, having seen everything already, sat down and talked together, while Mary did the honours of her alabasters, marbles, bronzes, &c. to me. Many of them were very beautiful, and I expressed my regret that while abroad I had not got something with which to have enriched her collection.

"I have enough," she said, "abundance,—and I should almost say, too many, were they not all tokens of affection from others; for there is so much misery in the world that I should not like to give or accept anything extravagant in any way."

"But if no one bought works of art," I observed, "artists would perish. The whole world cannot be employed in tilling the earth, or in the manufacture of the coarse garments which might just suffice to clothe and keep us warm."

"Oh, no!" she answered. "I have no doubt that various tastes are given that there may be a demand for various things, —and talents bestowed that they may be means of maintenance to those who possess them. I think, too, that as it pleases the Almighty that there should be difference of rank in the world, that difference should be seen in all things. Still we are told to 'let our moderation be known;' and though refinement

is allowable, yet excess of luxury is a selfish and cruel thing when many have not the common necessities of life."

"Yet as a remembrance of my great affection, I should have liked you to have had something from me," I said; "but I have not the slightest thing that I could give you, and now I ought not perhaps to spend *our* money in that way."

"You have one thing," she replied with a heightened colour and kindling smile, as she pointed to a ring with a turquoise which I always wore on my little finger.

"*Would you wear it?*" I exclaimed, delighted.

"Yes; and never take it off till you asked me to do so."

In an instant, the ring was transferred from my finger to hers, and I kissed with grateful love the hand she held out for it.

I can never forget the expression of her countenance as she looked at me, and said,—

"You quoted 'Paul's' words to me a little while ago, and I will now quote 'Virginie's' to you: '*Je n'oublierai jamais que tu m'as donné la seule chose que tu possèdes au monde*'" (I shall never forget that you gave me the only thing you possessed in the world).

"*Quand on aime*" (When one loves), I replied, in the same charming language, "*on ne peut rien perdre—ce qu'on donne, on retient*" (one can lose nothing—what one gives, one retains).

"One must love very much, though, to part with everything," she continued.

"One must love much more to accept everything," I replied. "When you were rich, I was willing to accept all from you, Mary. Did not I love much?"

Her lip quivered. She turned aside a moment; then opening a little case that stood near, she took out this ring, and placing it in my hand, asked me to wear it for her sake. It was beautiful, and I did not like to take it from her. I told her so, but she stopped me, saying,—

"Remember your own words, Wilfred: '*Ce qu'on donne, on retient*'" (What one gives, one retains).

CHAPTER XX.

If the happy knew how much power belonged to a single word of kindness,—a glance of feeling given to the despised,—they would not look so coldly on the miserable.—*The Bravo.*

THUS passed our days in peace and happiness. We read much, and spent our time in, I trust, useful as well as pleasant ways. Few days passed without our visiting some of the abodes of poverty and ignorance which lay scattered around us; and I was particularly struck with the effect of Mary's manner on the often suffering creatures we met with. One of the peculiar charms of her character was her constant cheerfulness. Wherever she went her gladsome presence made sunshine all around. "Her coming was a gladness." Never was happiness chilled by a look of hers, never did despondency meet the light of her eye without feeling half its burthen gone.

It was but little indeed of this world's goods that she had to bestow upon the poor. "Silver and gold have I none," she might almost have said; and, oh! with what truth added; "but that which I have give I unto you!" It might be said, "When the eye saw her, then it blessed her;" and it was delightful to me to see with what pleasure her visits were received. She had not that dictatorial way which I have sometimes observed in many, even very good people; nor did she tell the poor that theirs "were light afflictions," and that they should "be thankful for what they had." She felt, even from the contrast with her own ease and happiness, how heavy their sorrows must often be, and how difficult it was, even to the Christian—how impossible to the natural heart—to give thanks at all times. She would sit with kind sympathy to listen to their tale of troubles, and acknowledge—because she felt—how hard they must be to bear; then speak some bright and sunny word of better times and better worlds. She seldom went empty-handed, even though the gift might be no more than a ribbon for a doll's sash, or string for a boy's kite—anything, in short, to show they were thought of and their little pleasures remembered; and more small creatures' sorrows were cured in one day by the exhaustless *bouillons* which her little *sac* was ever ready to give forth, than the crossest of village school-dames could have produced among her naturally rebellious victims in a week.

Courteous she was too, to every creature. She never passed a

poor person, even though a stranger, in the lanes or fields, without a cheerful word or kindly salutation. Many a time has she laughed at herself for what she called "telling them what they knew without her:" in the heat, that "it was very hot;" in the dust, that "it was very dusty;" in the rain, that "it was very rainy." While, in the absence of all excitement as to the state of the weather, the ready "good morning," or "good evening," was there in kindly greeting to all as they passed.

"Why do you notice them when they do not notice you?" I asked her one day.

"Why should I not?" she asked in answer. "It must come from one of us first, and why not from me? They always answer pleasantly."

And they always did; and many a time have I seen a heavy-browed, care-worn woman, or sulky, dogged-looking man look at her beautiful countenance unmoved until she spoke to them, and then the cloud would lighten for a moment, and the features soften to a smile. The beauty was hers alone; but the kindly greeting was for them, and therefore it touched them.

"You know," she added one day, "I am so used to it in my own dear country, where no one in the fields or hills, or on the shore or anywhere, excepting perhaps in the streets, would think of passing another without some kindly greeting; and if the poor do not come out with their bunch of grapes, or strawberries, or bright sweet flowers, they give you at least the gay 'buon giorno,' or the warm 'salute;' and so it should be! Are we not brethren—creatures of one common creation? Can we suppose that the angels, when abroad on God's messages of mercy, meet and pass as strangers,—as if they had no common interest, no common love, no common God? Oh no! those things foster a kindly feeling, and that is like sunshine to the heart."

She was right; and if people could but know the value of a cheerful look and gentle word, how different would their homes generally be, and the world at large! When the door opens, and a joyous face appears—one's heart warms beneath its genial influence; but when a gloomy, or melancholy being walks in, one's own mind feels saddened and disturbed, and a chill falls even upon all one's own joys. It is a great sin neglecting these things; and though people may not be aware of it, yet those who indulge—if indulgence it can be called—in habitual gloom and lowness of spirits when they have no real affliction, indulge also invariably in habitual impatience and selfishness. Lowness of spirits—unless as I have said, under great immediate affliction—would in the 'Palais de la vérité' (Palace of truth) be forced to call itself irritable weakness, and dignified gloom, selfish disregard of the feelings of others; while cheerfulness might call her-

self an animated wish to promote the happiness of all around; and gentleness—God's messenger of peace on earth!

I had run up to town frequently to see friends and relations, and on matters of business, and had sometimes paid more distant visits, though it was, as may be supposed, more from duty than inclination, that I ever absented myself from home. I had seen Bruce several times; and was happy to find his pious feelings wholly unchanged, though grieved to see that his sentiments for Mary were so too. But he ever seemed delighted to see me, and warmly sympathized in all I told him of my affairs. He was much concerned to hear of the change in Mary's fortune, and much irritated at the account of Captain Normanton's visit.

"I told you how it would be," he exclaimed, "he'll torment her as long as he is alive, and if he die first, he will do as the Frenchman obligingly promised his love to do: *'Il dansera à ses noces en cadavre'*" (He will dance at her wedding in the character of a corpse).

"Provided he does not perform Alonzo the Brave's terrific waltz with her, and 'bear her away to the tomb,' I shall not much care for that," I replied; "though I really am very sorry for him."

"Sorry for him! I've no patience with you, St. Clair. Why should you be sorry for a 'fellow' (and he looked at me with a smile, as the old expression escaped his lips) who cares for nothing in creation but himself? How much does he think of you? Is he not at this moment doing all he can to make you and Miss Sydney miserable? I can't bear to hear you talk in that way! Sorry for him!" And he took off his hat to cool his rage,—we were walking together in St. James's Park.

"Nevertheless it is quite true," I said; "I *am* sorry for him. I have not the unmitigated abhorrence of him that you have; I could name many good things in him, and I cannot help thinking somehow that he is really improved by having been so much with Mary—not half the martinet he was when first we joined. Depend upon it, Bruce,

" 'All have some virtue, if we leave it them
In peace and quiet.' "

"Well, his virtue methinks ought to be, just now, in leaving you 'in peace and quiet.' "

"About this affair I confess, I think he does behave ill," I said, "but then I, of all creatures, can best feel what it must be to——"

"Go on," said Bruce, in a subdued voice, drawing his hat

again over his brow, "never mind me. But my feeling is totally different from his. Besides I feel that I owe so much to you both—to her for her prayers, to you for your words—for it is they which have raised me from 'raking in the dust,' like Bunyan's old man, to see 'the crown invisible, immortal,' that hangs over my head,—that I can never be grateful enough. You have given me high and holy motives for action, a blessing inappreciable! and I can never cease to bless the hour when you and she first trod the same deck with me."

"Your saying so always makes me happy," I replied; "it is such eternal joy to think of having been the means of raising one soul to everlasting life and happiness. 'Ever-lasting happiness!' Think of those words, Bruce, as put together."

"'Who shall grasp that thrilling thought? life and joy for ever!'"

"Thrilling indeed!" he said, a slight shiver passing over him as if the thought had gone through his very soul; "all else fades before that! I wish I could always keep it before me; but somehow at times the foreground closes in so thick that the distance gets shut out. But as to that man, I say again, I have no patience with him."

"I can't say that I have much," I replied. "Yet I really have no doubt that he thinks it would be happier for her to marry him, as he is so much richer than I am."

"Well, have it your own way," he exclaimed, growling in a provoked tone:

"'To make the crown a pund, my Jamie went to sea,
And Auld Robin Gray came a-courting to me.'"

"Very likely," I said, "but I don't fear the detested result:

'So they gied him my hand, though my heart was far at sea,
And Auld Robin Gray was gudeman to me.'

She would perish first! and I would wish her to do so. Better a million times the glorious freedom of death to such as her! There's nothing in existence more utterly despicable in a man than the selfishness which makes him tear a woman's heart to pieces by the very force of those feelings he should most respect and love in her. Why couldn't that hideous old man—if he ever had the misfortune of an existence otherwise than in song—have maintained his old friend, without making his young one miserable for it? I've no patience with such things! Why shouldn't a man if he wished to help his love, send her assistance—I would—without her knowing from whom it came? That would be glorious!"

"Yes, it would," said Bruce. "However, that's what he'll never 'dream of in his philosophy.' Everything with him will go to fill up the gaping, gasping, grasping hole of selfishness."

"Well! after all, when I think of my having asked Mary to marry me with my small fortune and 'modest prospects,' I think I was pretty selfish too."

"Not in the least! If you hadn't asked her she would have asked you—if she had dared; and therefore it was only kind of you to save her the trouble. And after all you only gave her the option—and no one can complain of that; she had only to send you adrift, and there was an end of you. But this 'fellow,' though he sees she has nailed her colours to the mast, yet fires a broadside every time he passes her; and will, if you don't take care, send out his boats some fine day—or rather dark night—cut her out from under your very batteries, and tow her away to his own port with drums beating and flags flying! If he doesn't, it will not be his fault. So lay that beautiful nautical figure of mine to heart, St. Clair, and keep a sharp look-out ahead."

"You are wonderfully nautical just now certainly," I answered; "spite of your always saying you hate that phraseology."

"Well, so I do; but it fell upon me all of a sudden, I suppose, out of the shadow of this great house, 'big with the fate of' St. Clair and of Bruce;" looking up at the Admiralty, which we were then approaching.

"Not with mine just now," I said; "I'm not going to trouble them for some time to come. I did hope never to do so again, but I fear I must in time under our change of circumstances; though for myself I don't care how little I have to live upon, so that one has enough just for comfort."

"And at what degree does the thermometer of your 'comfort' stand?"

"Oh! I should never want more than we have at present," I replied; "though to be sure the General's pension makes up most of his part now, he says, and that must go with him. But then I have a little."

"My dear fellow," said Bruce, "don't you be fancying you can live upon 'l'air embaumé de fleurs' (the air perfumed with flowers) a bit more than other people. Remember that what is enough for one, is poverty for two, and starvation for a dozen. I forgive you all your attractions if you make Miss Sydney happy; but if you marry her to her unhappiness, I never will forgive you. So now," he added, as we stopped at the Admiralty gate, "just come in here with me and show yourself, for this is my goal just now. Here I daily and hourly besiege them—pouring my 'hard case' into their ears; and never do I mean them to

rest, sleep, eat, or drink in comfort, till they've given me my promotion. So come along,—you'd much better."

"No, not now; I would not for worlds leave England till my engagement to Miss Sydney was fully acknowledged; for though our whole way of going on, and our families living together as they do, must make it a settled thing in the world's eye, still with the power Captain Normanton has over the old General, I should never feel sure that she were beyond the power of persecution unless his word of honour were passed."

"Nor then," exclaimed Bruce; "if, as you say, that man has such influence over him."

"Oh! yes," I answered; "spite of all his faults, if General Sydney's word is once passed, he will keep to it for ever, for he is the very soul of honour."

"Was,—say," replied Bruce; "for his soul, or sense, is well-nigh gone, and his honour may perhaps have kept it company for old acquaintance sake. But when do you expect your engagement to be finally settled?"

"Not for this year or more. My next birthday—the 10th of October—about three weeks hence, I shall be twenty; and by the best calculations, the year after I shall be twenty-one—'of age'—as it is called; at which time he said he would give his consent, if we remained in the same mind, and if he saw no reason to refuse it."

"Humph! an ugly proviso that!" cried Bruce, shaking his head. "Yes, you are right in staying. Keep your ground by all means, if you can; your promotion is of less consequence than that by far.—Well then, here we part—unless you can wait a little till I come out again."

"No, I cannot do that," I replied; "I have to dine at —'s to-night, and to-morrow I return home."

"God bless you then, old fellow!" he exclaimed, shaking my hand warmly; "and may He keep you happy—both of you."

"I'll walk up to the door with you," I said. And we went into the court together.

At that moment—who should come out of the door but Captain Normanton! Bruce grasped my arm,—I heard him clench his teeth. The Captain came towards us with his downward look, and did not raise his eyes till we were close to him.

We made a little way for him, and we should both have been heartily glad had he passed on without recognizing us. But being a remarkably well-bred man, he looked up with a little bow of acknowledgment when he observed us moving out of his way, and then he perceived who we were. He stopped,—and so did we of course. He held out a hand to Bruce, and then to me; but his manner was exceedingly embarrassed.

He spoke of his pleasure in seeing us. "Seeing us together reminded him of old times," he said. Then excusing himself, he added that he was in a hurry—and so departed. We walked on a few steps in silence. At the door we stopped, and again shook hands.

"If you haven't applied for employment for yourself," said Bruce bitterly, as we parted, "take my word for it, it has been applied for, for you."

CHAPTER XXI.

Ye commune of hopes and aspirations, the fervent breathings of the heart;
 Ye speak with pleasant interchange the treasured secrets of affection;
 Ye listen to the voice of complaint, and whisper the language of comfort;
 And as in a double solitude, ye think in each other's hearing.

Proverbial Philosophy.

BRUCE's words hung heavy on my heart during all my journey home the next day, and spoiled the pleasure which I should otherwise have derived from the thought of reaching again that centre of my earthly affections—spoiled too the enjoyment which the drive that beautiful morning would otherwise have given me.

Curious and sad it is, that while the words of Him who spake as never man spake so soon fade from one's mind, the words of a fallible mortal like oneself have power to toss the soul about in such restless unhappiness. "Oh! for an overcoming faith!" Truly is it with us as with Peter—when we look to the Lord we can walk on the top of the stormiest waters, but when we take our eyes off Him, we feel the winds and waves around us, and beginning to be afraid, we sink in faithless despair. But He is God, "patient because eternal," and of never-failing mercy; therefore His gracious hand is ever ready for the sinking soul, and His voice of mercy ever whispering in its inmost recesses: "Oh thou of little faith! wherefore didst thou doubt?"

That morning was indeed most beautiful! There had been a violent storm in the night, and when I mounted the box of the coach at an early hour, the thunder was still muttering in the west and the rain descending in torrents from black clouds in the far horizon, while a light and silvery spray was still falling around us,—shining as it fell, like diamonds in the morning sun which had just disentangled itself from the network of frail vaporous rack which the storm had left behind. The meadows, and commons, and grass fields were covered with the threads of the

gossamer;—or as foreigners call them, “*Les fils de Marie*” (the threads of Mary), which, catching the small drops as they fell, made the whole earth white as with a silken veil. The song of the spring birds was of course hushed; but the “inarticulate voice of the loyal universe” was still raised aloft. The thrush and the blackbird sent out their clear ringing notes from the gardens and shrubberies as we passed, and the more distant woodlark, whose song scarce yields in charm even to that of the nightingale, sung loud among the trees; while as we dashed along the wet and fresh-smelling road between the glittering hedges washed bright by the rain from every grain of dust,—the skylark sent down from overhead, showers of song, or, startled by our approach, from her grassy nest, rose with her fluttering music straight up into the air,—

“Type of the wise, who soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of Heaven and home.”

Yet the pleasure of all these things was lost to me, because I would dwell on the possible unhappiness of a possible future!

But oh! the thought of parting! the thought of Mary—her loveliness—her tenderness—that I must leave it all, and go alone to distant climes! Oh! it seemed as if I had never loved—never felt her love, before!

In this wretched mood I reached home. I tried to shake off the oppression on my spirits lest Mary should perceive it, for I did not wish her to be disturbed by the perhaps unfounded fears that troubled me. But I had but little self-command; or rather, perhaps, I was so much in the habit of saying everything to her, that to keep back any feeling from her was an almost impossible effort.

The storm which we had had in London had passed off in another direction, and had left our neighbourhood quite unvisited. I was glad of this as it enabled us to sit out as usual in the garden, which we much preferred to the house where our readings and conversations were liable to continual interruptions; but now as I sat under the accustomed trees my endeavours to be cheerful sorely failed, and I saw Mary's eye often fixed on me as if anxiously watching my countenance. It was the first approach to anything like a separation of thought which had ever occurred between us, and was too painful to be borne; and she might too think that the cause of my trouble was more deep and real than in truth it was, so at last I determined to tell her; and the next time that I caught her anxious look, I answered it with a smile, and said:

“You think there is something troubling me, Mary; and so there is, though it is not much.”

I then told her what had occurred in town, and of the effect that Bruce's words had had upon me. She breathed a deep sigh.

"You think me very foolish, don't you," I asked, "for being troubled about such a 'perhaps'—such a mere imaginary evil?"

"No," she replied kindly, "I do not wonder at your being troubled at it. But, dear Wilfred, *must* you go if they do appoint you to a ship?"

"Unless I wish to put myself on the shelf ever after," I replied. "The Lords of the Admiralty are not accustomed to having their appointments refused."

Her countenance fell.

"I had never contemplated your going away," she said with a sigh, "though it was foolish of me not to do so, as now you must of course follow your profession. But it seems as if life could not be without you! However, don't let us think of it—it makes one too unhappy. It is merely a vague fancy of Mr. Bruce's, and his fears may be wholly unfounded."

"I trust they are," I said; "but every time the remembrance of Captain Normanton's countenance comes before me as I saw it in this place, I seem to feel that passions like those cannot but issue in evil to those whom he hates."

"You have generally taken his part, Wilfred, you must not begin to be unjust."

I did not answer, but sat by her gloomy and dejected.

"Are you so fond of the thought of parting," she added smilingly after a time, "that you take it for your companion before you need?"

"I cannot help thinking of it—and with fear and pain,—whatever you may do," I answered reproachfully.

She seemed hurt.

"I do not wish to think of it," she answered gently, "just because it would be with such fear and pain. When it does come, God will give me strength to bear it, I know; but He has never said, 'As thy *morrow*, so shall thy strength be *to-day*,' so it would be more, perhaps, than I could bear now."

"But the thought of parting is a *present* evil to me," I answered, "now—this very hour."

"Ah! dearest Wilfred!" she said, laying her gentle hand so pityingly on my shoulder, as I rested on my elbow on the grass by her side, "our gracious God never lets fall on His children a trial which is too hard for them at the moment. Only let us trust to Him; and I feel sure that we shall always find ourselves equal to what He sets before us."

"It may be so," I replied with a sigh; "but to me just now it seems as if all happiness were being swept away, just as this

stream bears off what I cast upon it." And in wantonness I tore up a handful of the grass and threw it on the shining waters, which bore the scattered fragments in thousand eddies swiftly out of sight.

"What is it makes the difference between our feelings, Mary?" I added, "for I am sure that your affection is as great as mine. When speaking the other day to Bruce, I refused to look forward to any disaster; but now the thought of parting so kills my heart that the very sun has ceased to shine, the birds to sing, the flowers to smell for me.—What is it makes me so troubled, and you so calm?"

"I don't feel calm now, Wilfred," she replied tremulously; "your sadness has saddened me. But I will tell you," and she looked up with a brightening countenance, "how I often comfort myself in cases which would otherwise cast my spirits down: I look round and see everything to enjoy, and I then think: 'how can what is to be to-morrow, affect this moment?' And then I pray that I may not spoil the pleasure given by God at the moment, and I try to enjoy what I have."

I felt that she was right, and I saw that she was sad, and I knew that it was I that was the cause of her sadness. Yet a wayward irritation possessed my mind, and steeled it against kinder emotions, as I exclaimed bitterly:

"Then if you knew we were to part for ever to-morrow, you would be as happy as usual to-day?"

"Oh, Wilfred! to know that we *must* part—" She stopped, and covering her face with her hands, burst into tears.

"There, Mary!" I exclaimed, more pleased than touched at her emotion—wretch that I was!—"you can feel as well as I. Where is your philosophy now?"

"Gone," she said, shaking her head, while the tears still streamed down thick and fast.

I drew one hand down with gentle force from her face, and kissed it with deep repentant tenderness.

She clasped mine for a moment; then withdrawing it, wiped her eyes and her poor wet cheeks, and turning to me with a smile, though a quivering one, said:

"Yes! my philosophy was all gone, Wilfred, but you have no cause for triumph, for I chose to leave the present—the happy, happy present—and think of that dreary hour which after all may never come. I was foolish—and therefore sorrowful."

"Dearest Mary!" I exclaimed—my whole heart gushing out in tenderness towards her, "how hateful I have been. Oh! what a difference it would make to both of us, if you were one whose weak spirit was continually sinking and drawing mine down with it, instead of your having that bright affiance in God

which spreads the warmth and light that you get from Him on everything around!"

Three days after that we were again sitting in the same place, when the servant brought out the letters to us. Mary had one from abroad, which she opened with delight.

I too had one, and with horror saw above the direction, in printed letters: "On His Majesty's service." I tore it open; and with feelings impossible to describe, read that my promotion had been given me, and that I was appointed to the—which was already commissioned, and would sail in a fortnight. My agony was so great, that I could hardly read to the end; but forcing myself to do so, I found that most unmerited praise was bestowed upon me—the letter stating, that in consequence of the very high character given me by Captain Normanton and his warm recommendation, my promotion had been given me though wholly unsolicited by myself.

I crushed the paper in my madness, and starting up furiously, raised my hand to heaven, exclaiming in wild revenge:

"Now may God's——"

"Oh! curse him not! do not curse him!" exclaimed Mary, springing up, and throwing her arms round my neck; "I feel what it is, but do not curse him—do not curse him."

Her voice grew fainter and fainter, and her head sunk heavily on my breast. My arms relaxed from their fierce tension; and as I folded them round her sinking form, I felt with tenfold force the weight of the trial that had fallen upon me. My heart heaved with the mighty passions which contended within it; till at last, to relieve my brain, torrents of tears burst forth, falling over Mary's pale forehead and shining hair.

My mother ran to us.

"My dearest Wilfred," she exclaimed, "what is the matter?"

I shook my head—incapable of speaking, while with her help I placed Mary in a chair. I was terrified; I had heard of people's fainting but had never seen anything of the kind before, and Mary's insensibility and death-like paleness made me think she was dying. My mother, who saw my horror-stricken countenance, told me not to be afraid for that it was only faintness, and bid me run to the house and get some water. I flew there, but how I got it I have no conception, my mind was so completely bewildered. However, I did get it, and hastened back as fast as possible. Mary was still insensible, and her head resting on my mother's shoulder, who was kneeling by her and endeavouring, by chafing her hands, to restore animation. By her direction I bathed her forehead, and soon to my inexpressible

relief, I saw by the slight quivering of her lip and her short convulsive sighs, that consciousness was returning; and soon, alas! the large tears which gathered slowly beneath her closed lids, showed that the sense of suffering was also restored.

Again my mother looked at me and whispered—

“What is it, Wilfred?”

“He is going,” murmured Mary, who had caught the words; and turning to her, she threw herself on her neck, and in silence they wept in each other's arms, while I stood by with hard dry eye, and fire at my heart.

I felt convinced that what had overcome Mary so much was not only the pain of parting, but the horror of seeing me in such a state of excited passion and of knowing that fearful curses were bursting from my lips. God forgive me, but it was a fearful moment.

My mother turned to me and said—

“What have you heard?”

I answered by picking up the letter, and putting it into her hand. She read it; and when she came to the part which mentioned Captain Normanton's share in the event, she looked up at me with a countenance full of trouble and uneasiness, and throwing her arms again round Mary folded her anew with passionate affection to her heart, as if she would thus have shielded her from every harm.

The old General having seen us from the window, now came out.

“What's the matter?” he demanded, in a half-frightened, half-angry voice.

I went to meet him, and told him of the letter I had received, and said that the suddenness of the summons had rather overcome Mary; adding, that I feared that the violence of my anger had also contributed to agitate her.

“Violence of your anger!” he exclaimed. “Why should you be violent or angry at all?”

“I did not wish to go, sir,” I replied; “and do not approve of Captain Normanton's having applied for my promotion, when I did not ask for it myself.”

“At any rate,” he said, with a sort of cross good humour, “you need not be angry because you get a good thing without having stooped to ask for it. ‘Some men achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them,’ as our famous dramatist says; and I suppose you are of the latter rare and fortunate kind of people. However, I will say that I shall be very sorry to lose you—very.”

We had now reached my mother and Mary. At the sight of the latter he seemed quite overcome. He went to her and took

her hand and passed his own soothingly over her still wet cheek, but seemed as if he could not speak. He sat down by her side. At last, making an effort to be gay—

"So you're very sorry, are you, Mary," he said, "that this young scapegrace is going to be kept in order a little? Well, never mind, he'll come back all the better for it; we have been ruining him here among us."

She could not answer.

"Let me see this famous letter which has caused such dismay," he continued. "They who sent it little thought of the reception their good news, as they doubtless considered them, would meet with—tears and rage, instead of smiles and gratitude! I confess that the rage surprises me, though the tears perhaps don't." And the old man sighed.

My mother gave him the letter. He read it, and seemed highly delighted; and jumping round on his chair, he seized my hand, and shook it vehemently.

"Very handsome!" he exclaimed; "very handsome indeed—highly complimentary! And pray, my young lieutenant, if this move your wrath, what beneath the constellations might be thought worthy of striking the spark of gratitude out of your flinty heart?"

"I did not, as I have said before, sir, wish to go away at all at present; and if Captain Normanton had not had his own ends in view, he would never have acted as he has done."

"I don't see what ends he can have in view in getting your promotion," said the General, "excepting to serve you. What could it have signified to him if you had died at eighty-nine of being a midshipman, eh?"

An imploring look from Mary prevented my saying more; and the old man turning round again seemed anew melted at the sight of her distress and that of my mother.

"My dear madam!" he exclaimed, addressing the latter, "we have forgotten you in this trying moment—you who have more cause to lament this young fellow's absence almost than any of us. You will forgive our selfishness." And he took her hand and kissed it with the chivalrous respect which always marked his manner to her.

She was much overcome; and, moved to the heart, I went and tried to comfort her.

"Come, come, my dear madam!" said the old man cheerfully yet feelingly, "we must not have you so downcast. Our young sailor will soon return, and then I shouldn't wonder if he tried to refresh my memory about some wild, foolish question he once asked me; and if he does not set fire to his ship, or knock the Captain on the head to get the command himself, why there's no

saying what answer he may receive. Come, we must look forward to brighter days."

His words threw me into an agitation that it is impossible to describe. I longed to implore him as the only mitigation of the sufferings of that hour—not one quarter of which he guessed—to give without delay that formal consent to our engagement which alone could tranquillize my mind as regarded Mary during my absence; but the more intense my anxiety became for him to do so, the more utterly was I incapable of mastering my voice to ask it. The only thing I could do was at last to stoop down to my mother, and whisper to her to ask him.

"He will do it for you," I added; "and *you* know why we wish it so earnestly."

"What is he saying there?" asked the General, with the merriest possible look in his peering gray eye; "is he saying he had hoped I had forgotten all about that by this time? Eh?"

"Quite the contrary," replied my mother, trying to respond to his cheerful tone; "he was begging me to entreat you to give your consent now, before he goes."

"Humph! that's rather quick upon me," he replied, pretending crossness, but twisting his features into a wonderful form, as he always did when in particularly good humour; "why, the boy's not out of his teens yet. Pshaw! my dear madam, get him a kite and hoop, and bat and ball, they would suit him better a great deal than a wife. You shouldn't put the noose round the colt's head too soon; let him have his gallop round the paddock before he is put into training."

"I've been in training some time, sir," I answered smiling; "and am now quite ready to put on the harness. You cannot deny me my request, dear sir," I then added with deep emotion, as I dropped on one knee at his side, and took his hand and kissed it.

Mary knelt by him on the other side, and kissed the hand she held.

"Get away with you both," he cried, making pretended efforts to rise. "Let me get up, I won't be handcuffed in this way. Let me get up, I say."

But we smilingly put each a hand upon his arm, and said he should not stir till he had given his consent. He continued making violent feints at rising, till at last pretending exhaustion, and sinking back in his chair, he exclaimed—

"Very well! now remember—I protest beforehand against anything I may say, forced from me in this way by compulsion, and under bodily terror. I take you to witness, my dear madam."

My mother replied that she feared she was too much interested

in the matter for her testimony to be relied on; adding in a more earnest tone, that if she did not think that the wish expressed by his own dear child would be all-prevalent with him, she would join her voice too to the petition, and beseech him to give the consent that was so much desired.

"And what is the mighty advantage you are expecting from the puff of modulated air you are all bent on extracting from this crazy old body of mine?" he asked, turning his head backwards and forwards from one to the other, with the most comic expression of countenance.

"Oh, you must yield to your love, my father, not to our reasons," said Mary, lifting her eyes to him with a look that could not be resisted. The old man gazed on her with admiring love, and smiling down upon her, said—

"That shows that you have but little reason to plead, doesn't it?"

"Then you will have the more love to show," she replied, putting her arm round his neck and drawing down his face to rest upon her dear cheek. He left it there a moment, and put his arm round her, pressing her to him. Then starting upright again, he exclaimed—

"All bribery and corruption! treason and treachery! wiles and wickedness! However, I suppose I'm not to have a moment's peace, or to enjoy a quiet meal till I've obeyed orders, so had best do it at once. Well then," he continued, almost solemnly, "as you will have it so, my dear children—my foolish children! I will consent to your being engaged from this time; but your marriage must depend upon God's giving you the means, and may His blessing rest upon you!"

He joined our hands together as he spoke; then placed his own on our heads, as we bent them reverently for his benediction.

My heart sprung up in relief unspeakable and in gratitude unbounded, to God.

The desired consent was gained—and it seemed as if nothing now could trouble me. The pain even of our near parting was for the moment forgotten. I could scarcely speak; it seemed as if—were I to open my lips—a portion of my happiness would escape. My heart was as

"a sealed fountain

Bounding secretly with joy unseen, and keeping down its ecstasy of pleasure."

I could have prolonged that hour through centuries!

CHAPTER XXII.

By "hallowing" God's name is meant, keeping it separate from all other names; preserving it as the special treasure of our spirits; not suffering the idea of absolute holiness, purity, goodness, to be soiled by any defilements from without, or from within.—MAURICE ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

"TELL me, Mary," I said a few days after that happy hour, "what was it that overcame you so much when that letter about my appointment came?"

"It was very sudden," she replied, "and you seemed so——. It was a mixture of many feelings."

"Don't fear making me feel my wickedness," I said; "but tell me, was it not that my passion was so great, and that you saw I was going to curse that man?"

"Perhaps it was," she replied, with the peculiar gentleness and feeling with which she ever touched on a point of blame in another; "I felt as if I could not bear to hear you pronounce a curse, it seems such a fearful thing!"

"I was afraid it was that, and have to implore your pardon a thousand times for my violence. But you will grant that I had just cause for anger."

"No one could help feeling it at such conduct as Captain Normanton's. And I am sure it was only at the first moment, when your mind was so on fire, that you could have felt tempted to wish him any evil. You could not do so now?"

"No, I could not. And yet it is a bitter wrong he has done me! But tell me that you forgive my violence and impiety."

"Oh, Wilfred! you know I do; and I am sure that even had you uttered the words, such an outburst under such provocation could not have been half so offensive to God as the habitual profanation of His name which is so common with many men. The continually calling upon Him for every foolish or wicked thing is such a frightful sin!"

"But surely, Mary, very few men would ever swear before you. I observed how particular many of them were about it on board ship, who swore incessantly when out of your hearing."

"I could scarcely have thanked them for attending to me when they so disregarded God," she replied. "If they could watch over themselves for a woman's sake, they might surely have done so for God's. It is a fearful sentence against them:

'The Lord will not hold them *guiltless*.' It seems so strange that those who weary themselves so as to the uncertain future of this life, should so wholly forget the irrevocable things of the next;—who feel so much about the things just around them, should forget how blessed is that country which will be the eternal home of those who love their God."

"One need though, often look to it," I observed—"to the 'blue openings between the tangled stems,' in order to keep up any buoyancy of mind at all sometimes—such times, for instance, as our parting will be. Oh, Mary! I do strive not to think of it—not to sink in utter misery, but you must be patient with me, as you know our God will. I have not your strong faith, nor your bright springful heart. And remember too, how far easier it is to bear a burthen for oneself than for another whom we love. A sea-life is certainly always a hard one, and without Bruce, the ocean will seem a desert to me; but still that is nothing to the thought of leaving you to the miserable companionship of your poor father, and to the persecutions of that man. And yet I do too, at times, feel the comfort of being able to commit you to the care of One whose love is—oh! can it be?—greater than my own! I can place you in His everlasting arms, and feel the shadow of His mighty wing protecting you. Oh, my beloved!—oh! my beloved! how past endurance would be the pain of parting were it not for that! You will think of me in everything—will you not? You will write to me,—you will pray for me,—you will let your spirit be ever with mine—you will feel for me,—do all but weep for me! Think of me as daily gaining heavenly strength, as daily becoming more worthy of your love, less unworthy of God's. Speak to me in heart, Mary! and as each day passes away, remember that we are a day nearer meeting again,—nearer too, to God's blessed, unparting Heaven! But, dearest love," I added, seeing her much moved, "is there only bright faith enough for one of us, that when I catch a little of its glow it should leave your heart, and that those sad tears should fall?"

"They are not sad," she replied; "such tears might almost flow in Heaven, and not need the All-merciful hand to wipe them away, it is so delightful to hear you speak of heavenly consolation."

A shiver of happiness passed through me as I heard her say this,—

"Legions of thrilling thoughts thronged about the standard of my mind."

But who might analyze them? Oh, will language ever be

given us to express what we feel?—or will Heaven itself exceed the rolling volumes of its celestial speech?

The hour of my departure at length approached. Nor love, nor grief, can stay Time's "rushing pinions,—on he sweeps!"

And well it is it should be so, for our natures here have nothing of abiding in them. Blessed be God that in His deep compassion He sent the flaming sword to guard the way of the Tree of Life, lest, in his miserable state, man should put forth his hand and take of its fruit and live for ever! And blessed, for ever blessed be His name! that that flaming sword is turned aside at Christ's all-powerful word, for those who seek salvation through his blood; and that to them He giveth "right to the Tree of Life," In them, made one with Him and with the Father, the principle of immortality is implanted, and on them "the second death hath no power." "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

The hour of my departure, as I have said, approached—and I must go! It is needless to dwell upon it! It was one of those partings, such

"As press the life from out young hearts."

But it must be done—and we parted!

I had business which detained me for a day in London, and I there met Bruce. I had written to tell him of the accomplishment of his prophecies, but when I met him, not one word did he say on the subject. Though rough occasionally in his way of speaking, there lived not a being more thoroughly delicate in his perceptions when anything of real trial was concerned. There was an expression of sadness mingled with his cordial greeting when we met; but he did not seem inclined to say much on the subject of my departure. Not one of his old warnings was repeated or alluded to; on the contrary, he tried rather to cheer my spirits, and spoke of glad return and a happy future. Still something seemed to weigh upon him, and conversation for the first time in our lives flagged between us. We were again on our way to the Admiralty, where I had business now, when at last he said:

"You know your destination, don't you?"

"No," I replied; "they did not tell me."

"It was not said at first," he answered in a lowered voice—"but I heard yesterday—and it is—the African station."

I stopped short, and so did he ; but he avoided catching my eye. I felt for a moment as if all the blood had deserted my heart. Yet it was not from apprehension of that deadly climate, for I had faith enough to feel that, with God's blessing, I was as safe in one place as another ; but it was from the horrible feeling of moral guilt. The thought flashed over me, that my appointment to that station was Captain Normanton's doing. I felt as if he were a murderer in his heart, and the horror with which that thought inspired me quite paralyzed me for the moment. Bruce, I fancied, read my thoughts, but did not answer to them ; and indeed, the next instant I rejected them myself with indignation. Captain Normanton a murderer ? Impossible ! And the blood rushed hot all over me again with shame for having harboured the thought for an instant. Bruce moved on, and I mechanically followed him.

"It is not so often fatal to sailors," he remarked.

"'Not a sparrow falls without God to the ground,' " I replied ; "and He will not take my life away unless He see a deep need for it. 'Ce que Dieu garde, est bien gardé.'" (What God keeps, is well kept.)

We walked on in silence.

"St. Clair," at length said Bruce.

"Well," I answered.

"I've never been down to Dover yet."

"I know it," I replied ; for he paused as if expecting some observation.

"But I shall go there now—soon. You're off guard, so I shall go on. I'm not going to let that 'fellow' have it all his own way."

"You are the best fellow !" I exclaimed. "But do not do anything that may cause you pain."

"If it does," he replied hurriedly, "I shall be repaid if I am able to be of any comfort to either of you."

"It would," I said, "certainly be the greatest comfort to me to know that your eye was over her, and that Captain Normanton knew it too—and felt it ; and it might be a great support to her, for the old man is nought, and my mother is too gentle and timid to keep such a man as that in his proper place, even should she continue to live with them,—which I fervently pray she may, though I cannot be sure of it when the term of the present house is up, which it will be in about a month."

"Where does General Sydney go then ?"

"I don't know, nor does he."

"Well, I shall go down, and occupy the ground before the enemy comes up, for he's away in Scotland I know, now. He put the fuse in the shell and escaped before the explosion.

But he shall not be in my company half an hour before he knows how futile all his plots and schemes will be, as regards your engagement to Miss Sydney at least."

I parted with this true friend with a regret second only to that which rent my heart at leaving Mary and my mother, and set off the next day to join my ship at Portsmouth.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Each word we speak has infinite effect.
 Each soul we pass must go to heaven or hell.
 And this our one chance through eternity :
 To drop and die like dead leaves on the brake,
 Or like the meteor-stone * * *
 Kindle the dry moors into fruitful blaze. * * *

Be earnest, earnest, earnest,—mad if you will !
 Do what thou dost, as if the stake were heaven,
 And that, thy last deed ere the judgment-day.

The Saint's Tragedy.

It was evening when I went on board the vessel that was to bear me to those fatal shores where physical evil vies—though at a far distance—with the moral atrocity which makes that devoted clime a very spiracle of the infernal regions.

After having gone through all the business of reporting myself, seeing the Captain—Captain Seymour—stowing away my things, &c., I went on deck and looked about me. My eye watched every face in the ship as it passed ; but not one of the hundreds in that little ocean-home had I ever seen before, and the desolation of solitude seemed added to that of sorrow. I should have been glad to have seen even the cabin-boy's face who had served with me in the old ship—any one, in short,—excepting one.

I turned, and looked towards the point where those I loved were—mourning I knew, my absence, and my soul seemed to rush into their beloved presence. I had found a letter from Mary on my arrival at Portsmouth ; and what a doubly delightful character did it bear in my eyes, as coming from her, and from her as my now affianced wife ! She did not then know of my destination, but I had written to tell her of it.

I was thinking of all these things, and living with the absent forgetful of the beings around me, when a rough, but at least a well-known voice spoke at my side; and turning round I saw the bronzed, but pleasant face of our old Captain's coxswain of the —. I was quite delighted at seeing him,—his appearance recalling in an instant vividly before me, the old ship and all my dear companions, Bruce, D'Arcy—Mary!

"I heard your honour was coming among us," said the old seaman; "and was glad to think of serving again aboard the same ship with you."

"Thank you, Lawrence," I replied; "I can say the same to you, for the sight of your face is very cheering among so many strangers, and brings the good old times quite back to one's mind."

"All hearty at home I hope, sir, whoever may be there," he said.

"All well, thank you. How is all with you?"

"Not so well as might be, your honour," replied the old man, smoothing down his thin hair with his hand, and looking up at me with an expression of meek resignation; "my old woman's gone, and the lad broke his arm; but that was well again afore I left."

"I'm sorry to hear you've had so much trouble," I said—"very sorry; I should like to see all the world happy. But we must wait a little longer for that."

"We must take two or three sails round the globe I fancy, afore we shall come to the land where that's the case," he said, drumming with his fingers nervously against the ship's side.

"And not find it then," I answered,

"No—not find it then," he replied. "Some people talk of heaven as a fine place; but, bless me, what do they know about it? Who's been up there to tell 'em, I wonder."

"There was One who came down from thence to tell us," I said, "and to teach us the way to it."

The old man shook his head.

"Ah! so they tell us. I take it he didn't get many to go back with him, though! Yes, I have heard talk of some such thing as that."

"Well, we'll talk still more of it, some of these days, Lawrence."

"If you're agreeable, sir, I am," he answered; "there an't so much good luck here, as that one need throw away a chance of sommut better elsewhere. But may I ask," he continued,— "no offence I hope, sir,—that young lady, Miss Sydney I think they called her,—she's well, I hope?"

"She is quite well, thank you," I replied; "I left her only

the day before yesterday; for do you know, old shipmate, she is to be my wife some day?"

"I thought as much, that I did," he said with a smile, and little bow of mingled respect and gratulation; "and I think, if I'm not too bold to say it, neither one nor t'other of you's gone far amiss as to choice. Ah, well!" he added mournfully, as he walked away, "that's the way of it,—one loses, and another gets."

I looked after him with a painful *serrement de cœur*! It is so sad to witness grief, and there was something so touching in the quiet sorrow of this rough old seaman. I thought with shame of my own murmurings and despondency, and resolved to fight against them, and to strive to divert them by endeavouring to be, while at sea, what Mary was on land,—a light, and strength, and joy to those around.

"Oh! God of Heaven!" I mentally exclaimed, "I cannot, as my Lord did, say 'Peace' to the waves that roll beneath, and to the winds that rage around one on this wild element, yet, taught by Thee, let me speak comfort to the troubled heart, and peace to the stormy passions of men. Let me be a messenger of mercy from Thee to these rough and untaught, these tried and tempted creatures of Thy hand, and do Thou bless me in the work; for 'beautiful,' not only 'upon the mountains,' but also on the boundless, pathless deep, 'are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publishes salvation.'"

Long did I dwell upon this delightful thought; and such animation and elevation of heart did it give me, that when I turned again from gazing towards my heart's home to look around at all the various forms and countenances of my new companions, instead of considering them any longer as strangers, I felt they were brethren, united in one common bond of joys and sufferings with myself,—creatures of the same Creator, and capable of being partakers of the same blest and heavenly calling. A glow of kindliness warmed my heart towards them all; and, from the happiness it imparted, I began to understand somewhat of the truth of St. Paul's words: "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him."

Soon after, on walking aft, I observed a fair childish-looking lad, who had apparently just joined for his first voyage, and who stood there pale and disconsolate, speaking to no one. I had no personal experience myself of the misery of that first desolate feeling of being sent from home and cast on the cold charities of our outwardly frigid natures. I had had friends on board the vessel in which I first sailed, and possessed moreover that cosmopolitan disposition which always fastened on whatever suited it, let it be in what place, or belong to what country it might.

Friends I must have, so friends I had. But with our generally reserved and "hermit natures," this is not often the case; and I have known some boys, and men too, suffer intensely on joining a new ship. Who but has been touched to the quick by the misery and wretchedness expressed by Nelson—that heart of fire!—on his first joining?

Pitying the poor lad therefore, I went up to him, and tried to cheer him;—talked of the sea, the ships, the view, the strange countries we should visit, starry nights we should see, &c.; but all in vain; nothing but low monosyllables could I obtain in reply, and not always them. Then I spoke of his home, and then the colour rose in his face, and his eye was raised to mine, and more than monosyllables flowed forth. He had no mother it seemed, but a father, and a brother a little older than himself. His heart opened wide now, and deep down in its inmost windings this elder brother evidently lay. He had given him this—and this—and this—bringing forth at intervals the pencil-case, the seal, the penknife, &c.,—cherished gifts of this brother's love, on each of which, after being displayed on the open hand a moment, the small fingers closed again with a clutch, as if the kind hand that had given them were there instead. He was now all life,—Pygmalion's statue animated by the spirit of love!

There is perhaps no tie in life which is so influential or compounded of such a variety of ingredients, as that between an affectionate younger brother and a kind elder one. Father and mother may be loved devotedly, but that is but *one* feeling, though a most pure and perfect one. It is a something with which the prospects of his own existence have but little to do—which lies simply in the heart, like a pearl in its shell. He never expects to be like his mother—never wishes, probably, to be like his father; there is too great a distance between them for his uncalculating mind to follow the links that bind the boy to the mature man. Politics, war, justice-meetings, country business, are to him parts of a far-off dry state of being, with which he has little or no sympathy. They belong to a domain which he has never entered, as his sports and amusements belong to one his father has for ever left; and no instinctive wish would ever lead either over the other's boundary.

But the tie to the brother a few years older is, on the contrary, a transfusion of himself into that brother,—a tie less pure, less disinterested perhaps, than the other, but more natural, therefore more strong. He looks upon this brother as a being, far indeed his superior, but still of the same order as himself—

many of his amusements lying on the outskirts of his tastes and habits. He glories in the reflected lustre of his magnificent leaps, his bowlings, and battings, and feels that they are things which he himself may soon emulate. He looks to his tremendous liberty of boating, and sailing, and riding, &c., as to a region whose full glories he is able perfectly to appreciate, and eagerly to anticipate. And when this brother kindly associates him sometimes as an humble companion in his games and pursuits, then the pride and joy of his heart are unbounded! His brother's words are to him oracles—his deeds perfection! What power then does he not possess! How used, let elder brothers well consider!

But to return to the little younger brother in question. His shyness and depression were all gone, and his sparkling eyes and glowing cheeks seemed actually to radiate light. How often is this the case with outwardly cold-seeming characters! Break through the crusting snow, and up leaps the Geser!

He was by my side all the rest of the evening, hanging a little behind unless when I spoke to him or stopped to do anything, when he came flush up with me for a moment, then again fell back, fearful as it seemed, of being obtrusive, yet impelled to follow any one who would take him from the blank corner of forgotten existence which he had occupied before. He was very grateful, poor lad for slight cause, and proved it afterwards in anything but a slight way. Truly

“Those hours are not lost, that are spent in cementing affection.”

That night, the wind being favourable, we weighed and stood down channel smoothly and easily; and the breeze afterwards freshening, brought us in fine style into Plymouth Sound, where we had to take on board some of the officers who had not yet joined.

It was at Plymouth that I had joined my first ship, seven years before; and as we lay there then for some days, my delight was to ramble about in the delightful grounds of Mount Edgecumbe. It was summer, and no one was there at the time, and all my hours of leave were spent there.

How I remember enjoying that first burst of perfect freedom! And the place was so beautiful, with its soft slopes and sunny lawns, and gardens of various fashions, its picturesque cottages, its wood-walks, and glades where the deer couched amid the fern. Then the charm of the blue sea, which here broke in wavelets on the shores of the little coves and inlets, there sent

its dancing spray among the red berries of the arbutuses which grow into absolute trees feathering down to the very waves, and then again came breasting high against the wall of rocks, with such a depth of water that the hand might fling a stone from the walk above on to the deck of the frigate that sailed beneath. These and the fine views around, form a combination of beauties unrivalled in our isle, and associated as they were with the bounding happiness of my untried boyhood, they ever made me hail the most distant view of the high grounds and blue woods of Mount Edgumbe with a pleasure quite indescribable!

It was twilight, and the well-known outline was all that was visible when we anchored in the Sound. I turned into my hammock at a late hour that night, having loved to linger on the scene till the last rays of the moon, as well as of the sun, had faded away. And next day, when

“The morn had risen clear and calm,
And o’er the green sea palely shone,”

ay! and almost before that, I was again up and about, looking with fresh delight on all around. And, lo! a new pleasure was prepared for me; for there, in perfect beauty, “sleeping on her own shadow,” I beheld my own beloved old frigate, the ——. A cry of joy escaped me as I recognized her, and I felt an instant impulse to throw myself over into the water, and swim to her side. Restraining my rapture however, within due bounds, I contented myself with first seeking out Lawrence and showing her to him; and then pointing her out, with all her matchless proportions, to whoever of the sailors and officers I could get to listen to me.

“That’s she, sure enough,” exclaimed the old coxswain, shading his eyes with his hand that he might see her the better. “That’s she,—there’s no mistaking her. There’s never another as can come up to her!”

“There’s nothing like her in the world,” I exclaimed. “What would I give to be on board her again, just spreading out her canvass to catch the breeze off Nice.”

“Very like, sir,” said my companion with a smile. “And yet they did say somehow then, that you and the Captain there didn’t always set your sails alike.”

“The Captain was an excellent officer,” I replied—a little displeasure in my tone, “and behaved very handsomely to me when I didn’t much deserve it, Lawrence; and better discipline was never kept in any vessel of his Majesty’s fleet than Captain Normanton kept on board the ——.”

“Right, sir,” replied the old man, in a deprecating tone; “and I meant no offence, sir, to you, nor to none as is absent.

Yes! sure enough, there never was a steadier hand on board than our Captain's, and that's it. It an't your gentleman as goes off like a rocket one minute and lets a man slip his duty the next to make up for it, as'll ever keep the spirits down; it's him as has always a taut hand on 'em, the same when you pipe to dinner as when you clear for action. You always know where you are with such a captain as that. Keep to your duty, and you're sure to be right."

"Well! that's high praise, isn't it?" I said. "And I can add still higher too, which is, that he never set either officers or men a bad example in his life; and I'm afraid that's more than can be said for most navy captains."

While I was speaking, young Somerville, my new friend, came up to me with the greatest animation in his face, telling me that his uncle was the captain of the —, "that beautiful frigate," as he truly called her, and that he was to go on board to see him.

"Oh! I must go too," I exclaimed. "I'd give the world to go over her again."

The boy was off like a shot, returning in a few minutes with greater glee than before, panting with running and eagerness, as, waving his cap with a "hurrah," he exclaimed,—

"You're to go; I've asked our captain, and told him it was your old ship, and he said you might go."

I thanked my little friend heartily, and soon, with bounding spirit jumped into the boat which had been lowered for our trip. As we neared the frigate how splendid she looked! She had been newly painted, and much of her rigging was fresh, and they had certainly turned her out of the dockyard the completest thing that ever was seen! "How Mary would admire her now!" I thought. The recollection of her however, sobered my spirits a little; and with mingled pain and delight did I again mount the deck I had so often trod with her.

But thoughts of the past were quickly dispersed, by young Somerville's introducing me to his uncle, which he did in a paroxysm of nervous ecstasy, looking from one to the other to see what effect we produced on each other; and certainly the effect produced on me by Captain Somerville was particularly pleasant. I soon requested to be allowed to go over the ship, which was very readily granted, the Captain himself volunteering to accompany me.

We went down, and visited first the mess-room. On entering it I started as if I had seen a ghost; for there, though in living bodily presence, stood—old Palgrave! just as if I had only left him there five minutes before. He seemed equally astonished at the sight of me, and turned all sorts of colours, rising hastily

from his chair and holding it by the back as if he were ready to defend himself against some onslaught he seemed to expect me to make. None however, did I meditate, and the sight of an old face in the old place was delightful. Springing towards him, I seized him by the hand, exclaiming,—

“Palgrave! old fellow! why, how came you here?”

“St. Clair! old fellow! why, how came *you* here?” he replied; his volatile mind changing in a moment from fright to fun.

“I came to take a look at our old quarters,” I replied, “but little thought to find an old shipmate. I didn’t know you were appointed to her again; I wish I had been with all my heart.”

“I should have been very happy to have had you with me,” said Captain Somerville; “and I am glad you have had such a pleasant meeting here. You and Mr. Palgrave were together then in the Mediterranean?”

“Yes, sir,”

“You were great friends then, I suppose?”

Palgrave and I exchanged glances in the most ludicrous manner, putting each other, as it were, into each other’s confidence as to our *not* having been great friends, and from that moment we really became such.

“We didn’t quarrel many times, sir,” he said, in the mildest of tones.

“Well then, perhaps you may prefer being alone together a little,” said Captain Somerville; “so I will leave you to Mr. Palgrave’s care, Mr. St. Clair, and shall be very happy to see you again on deck when you have looked about you as much as you like below.”

I thanked him, and thought him—what I think him still—the most courteous and gentlemanlike man—almost synonymous terms—I ever met with.

What a charm it is—and what a duty too! as binding upon us as any other in life. We are so apt to forget that “Thou shalt do no murder,” and “Be courteous,” are written in the same book—equally binding.

What a difference did this one man’s way of speaking make in my feelings at that time! I had been rather sad at looking at my old home—no longer mine; but soon there was such a warmth sent through my heart by the kindly words and manners of this stranger, that my spirits felt quite cheered, and as I went over all my old accustomed haunts, I saw only the bright side of things; and when, after having been everywhere, and taking leave of him, I descended the ladder to return to my own vessel, I felt a double regret that my lot was not again cast on board my dear old frigate.

I found also much really to like in Palgrave; he spoke of the

old times and our old shipmates so pleasantly, and seemed so perfectly to have forgiven the extremities to which I had proceeded with him and the mortifications which had ensued thereon—expressing, indeed, his sincere regret at the conduct which had occasioned them,—that I could not but feel quite kindly towards him; and when we shook hands at the well-known gangway, which I had passed so often,—and with what multitudinous feelings!—I parted from him with a sentiment of sincere regret, and real regard.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.
And the tongue is a fire; a world of iniquity.

ST. JAMES iii. 5-6.

WHEN I returned on board, I found two letters waiting for me; one from Mary, the other from Bruce. I opened the latter—which from its size, indeed, might rather have been called a packet than a letter—and read that first, for I liked to “keep my best till last.”

Its contents threw me into the greatest state of agitation.

“I was sure,” he wrote, “that you would like before you finally launched forth on the great deep, to have the report of an eye-witness as to your affairs at home, so I ran down to take a survey of my ‘station.’ I found Miss Sydney looking as she was sure to do, only not quite so joyous as usual—the only change perhaps, which you would like to hear of. She seemed surprised at seeing me, and not quite pleased I thought, till I contrived at a quiet moment, to tell her one of the reasons of my appearance—namely, the having constituted myself as your reporter concerning her health and well-being during your absence. The other—the intention of acting scare-crow to the unfortunate Captain,—I did not venture to hint at, fearing it might displease her. A very short time elapsed however, before I was called upon to assume the dignified position assigned to that animated class of characters; for, though I had thought him in Scotland, lo! a ring at the house-door, and lo! an opening of the room-door, and lo! the ‘pilfering daw,’ whom I was to chase from the golden fruit. At the sound of his name Miss Sydney, by whose side I had been sitting on the sofa, turned deadly pale, and I thought she was going to faint. But with an

evident effort she recovered her self-possession, and rising as he approached her, she received him with that calm grace and dignity, which you have seen too often for me to be obliged to describe. He, poor man! (for through certain weak and porous parts of my composition a little frater-feeling sometimes filters in), seemed so absorbed by the brightness of the sun of his worship, that my meaner rays were for a moment (for the first time in my life, I flatter myself,) eclipsed. To avoid the risk of being run down (and a little from the 'Middy's' old respect and awe), I had not only risen on his entrance, but had stood aside to allow him sea-room as he sailed up,—every stitch of canvass set,—and bore down in splendid style upon his prize (as he hoped). But after the first broadside, when the smoke had cleared away a little (I know you like me to be nautical, and parenthetical!), he discovered a strange sail alongside, (strange enough he seemed to think it and bristling with guns he soon found it); and turning to see what it was—saw what it was. I thought *he* would have fainted then, he seemed taken aback in such an awful style; just as if he had fallen in with the 'phantom ship,'—or with you again. 'Nil admirari' is a lesson he has yet to learn, I perceive; and certainly I stretched his wondering powers to the utmost that day.

"I *can* be cool when I like it, as I dare say, you know; and on an impartial review of my conduct, I think I was so on that occasion. I need not give you all the programme of the emotions he had to go through; or record the varyings of his dying-dolphin hues. Suffice it to say that Dolphin didn't die; but coming round after a time, seemed to have serious thoughts of taking up the position alongside the 'prize,' which I had occupied before. Seeing this, I slid into it sideways, with the most easy grace imaginable; addressing some observation to Miss Sydney, with a cheerful familiarity and dandified ease which nothing but the pressure of circumstances at the moment could ever have made me assume. She seemed again surprised, and again displeased—naturally; but a confidential look which I contrived to give as our baffled friend turned to speak to your mother, made her smile with that playful turn of the lip which is such a peculiar beauty in her, and which made me feel that I was understood, and forgiven. The old General then came in, and greeted the Captain most warmly; but his *prévenance* had something so nervous and ultra-courteous in it, that I confess it made me feel very uncomfortable; and proved to me without a doubt that your suspicion, of our Captain's possessing an undue influence over him, was quite correct.

"If there is a point for uneasiness it is that; not as to ultimate results, of course—for I presume you feel as confident of Miss

Sydney's constancy and truth as I do—but I mean as to temporary discomfort for her. However, according to your old, or rather newly-adopted principle, we will not go in search of the uncomfortable, but let the uncomfortable come in search of us—if it want us. After the first complimentary speeches, the old gentleman exclaimed, 'Mary, my dear, have you seen Captain Normanton?' 'Yes,' she replied quietly. He then turned to me, saying, 'May I introduce our friend, Mr. Bruce, to you, Captain Normanton?' 'I have already the pleasure of Mr. Bruce's acquaintance,' replied the Captain, in a tone that showed I thought, that he didn't at that moment quite properly appreciate that pleasure.

"'You remember, my father,' said Miss Sydney, (and how that mode of addressing him sent me back on board that blessed old — again!), 'that Mr. Bruce was with us on board Captain Normanton's ship.' 'Oh yes! how can I be such an old fool?' exclaimed the poor General. 'To be sure! Why it was he who behaved so handsomely about the quarrel, and sent us word it was no fault of young St. Clair's. I recollect it all now; but my old brains get so confused. Yes!—very well he behaved, and very feelingly; and it was not what every one would have done.' (I repeat this lest Miss Sydney should forget to tell you of it.) And so he went on, seeming to lose in the overwhelming remembrance of my past merits, the sense of my present presence, till his mind taking a fresh start, he turned with immense alacrity to the Captain, exclaiming, 'By the bye, my dear sir, we have a thousand thanks to give you for the very handsome way in which you spoke of St. Clair to Lord —, and for so unexpectedly procuring his promotion. He hadn't an idea of it himself, and seemed indeed, foolish boy! rather vexed about it; but it was most excessively kind of you.'

"The poor Captain seemed ready to sink under the weight of his merits; and would gladly, I suspect, have been the most worthless of his kind, so he could have escaped this *exposé* of his righteous deeds. But all in vain; for with ruthless gratitude did the old man continue to persecute him, till he seemed wrought to frenzy. Did compassion touch soft chords within my breast? Not a whit! They were strung to the tune of vengeance, and fiercely did I carry out the strain. I turned again towards my gentle companion, and began, with laboured sprightliness, 'Talking of absurdities, Miss Sydney,' (which we had not been talking of), 'I read such a story the other day,—in one of Miss Sinclair's amusing books, I think. Some old lady was advised to read the Bible, which she had never before it seemed, done. She did so, and took to it amazingly, thinking it so very entertaining! Going in to dinner with some bishop a little while after, she

thought it would quite suit him; so, in a lively, conversational tone she said, 'What a shocking story that was, my lord, about David and Uriah!'" Meaning to point this at my victim, I looked at him full as I spoke. I was really horrified! The black blood rushed to his temples, while his lips turned perfectly white. His eyes flashed fire, as his restless glance shot from face to face. He seemed as if he would have sprung upon me like a tiger, but he suddenly turned and rushed out of the window on the lawn, where, as he stood with his back to us, I saw by his deep, awful inspirations, that he was trying to calm and cool down the fire and fury within—and no wonder. I can't tell you how conscience-stricken I was the moment the words had left my lips, and how deeply I still regret (spite of my jocularly) ever having spoken them—they were so wholly unchristian as well as so dastardly; for how could the unfortunate man take notice of them when he must have known that to do so would have shown that he felt their sting? Most truly did and do I grieve for them; and needed not the look of quick reproach which Miss Sydney gave me—reproach mingled with so much surprise and embarrassment, that I suppose till then she was not aware that I was acquainted with Captain Normanton's feelings for her. 'Forgive me,' I said in a low, and really penitent voice. She shook her head, as her eyes dropped, and the colour mantled painfully in her cheek. Mrs. St. Clair looked disturbed, while the General seemed in consternation at the Captain's sudden flight, and kept looking from me to his daughter and from her to me, from under his shaggy eyebrows, with most displeased and inquiring glances.

"I would have given anything never to have been, or to have been able to have gone out, and implored my victim's pardon. But that was impossible, for what reason could I give for appearing to think that the story contained any more elements of disturbance for him than for others? Something, however, must be done, for I felt sure that he never would be able to come back by himself and face us all again, so must die where he stood; so I suggested to Miss Sydney that we should go out to him. She acceded instantly, showing thus most sweetly her double, kind forgiveness of him and me; and, I following her, went up to him, and in the most winning manner began speaking to him: 'You have been into Scotland, Captain Normanton, have you not?'

"He seemed incapable of answering, and I never saw such painful emotion depicted on a countenance in my life. How I hated myself! I could but send up my sinful heart to God, and implore forgiveness, and a kinder spirit. At last he murmured something, and she continued in a kind tone asking him about

his journey. His answers gradually became less and less embarrassed, and he seemed evidently touched by her kindness. For a moment I saw him look at her—'twas but for a moment, but I wish I had not seen it—the expression of his countenance haunted me for hours. Such a rush of almost woman's softness came over that stern brow, mingled with so much of sadness, as completely, for the moment, altered the whole man, and again I felt wretched at having added a needless pang to a heart already so sorely tried. Your mother and the old man then joined us, and the conversation became more general. But as we walked about the garden, Captain Normanton got near me, and said in a low, constrained voice, 'I wish for some private conversation with you, Mr. Bruce.' I bowed my acquiescence, and he continued: 'If you are staying in this house, perhaps you will oblige me by taking a walk in the country; if not, we can perhaps return to Dover together.' 'I am not staying here,' I replied, 'but return to town to-night, so I can walk back with you to Dover.' 'Thank you,' he replied; and bowing slightly in his dreadfully gentlemanlike manner, he returned to converse with General Sydney.

"Now did not 'my sin find me out?' You know that I have a horror of duelling, considering it wicked and childish;—wicked if you wish to kill—or be killed—childish if you don't,—bad any way. But 'here I am in for it,' I thought. In for what? Duelling? No! certainly not—for I was determined not to add sin to folly,—murder of the hand, to murder of the tongue—but 'in for a challenge,' and then for what was much worse—the having to refuse it; and then—contempt, and contumely, and disgrace; and a private hint from high quarters, enforced by public ones from million eyes and tongues, that 'I had better leave the service.'

"This was all very pleasant! But I am really thankful to say that not for one passing moment did my mind waver. I dare say there was a great deal of pride in this—I am sure there was; for somehow it is so difficult to keep oneself from that plague-spot, when one is making a sturdy stand against general opinion, even though for conscience' sake; and I could not but feel, too, that those who do not mean to 'use daggers,' should 'speak' none, and sorely did I lament that haste and intemperance of spirit which has so often brought me, (and will I fear bring me still oftener before it has done with me) into sin and trouble. Not but that the evil lies far deeper with me than mere heat and haste of temper—that is what you have, and I like it—as a choice of faults; but mine is intolerance of mind, and hardness of opinion, from which bitter roots proceed, naturally, bitter fruits. I grieve over them, I can't tell

you how much, for they bring the cause of Christ into disrepute, and give so much occasion for His enemies to triumph. How terrible when one really loves that Holy Being, to force Him to say: 'These wounds have I received in the house of my friend.' You have often spoken to me kindly and faithfully about this, St. Clair; do so continually, and add to your cautions—prayers.

"After we had walked about a little while longer, we went in to luncheon, 'with what appetite we might,' but that was not much. Nor did the 'flow of soul' proceed with us much better; so we two belligerents soon took our leave, feeling that we had shortened each other's visits, and destroyed the pleasure of them too. (No bad thing perhaps.) We walked along in perfect silence till we got to those meadows which you have not forgotten, I dare say. When there, Captain Normanton began. (And oh, what a commotion I was in when he opened his fire; and how I longed to exclaim, 'Tell me first of all whether you are going to call me out or not.')

"Mr. Bruce,' he said, 'it would be useless after the agitation which I am conscious of having betrayed on your telling that absurd story at General Sydney's, to pretend not to have perceived—coming as it did immediately upon the General's thanking me for having procured Mr. St. Clair's promotion and appointment—that it was aimed at me. A little consideration, however, will I am sure, make you feel the ungenerous nature of such an attack, leaving me as it did without remedy, for by taking notice of it as an affront, and resenting it as such in the way usual amongst gentlemen, I should lay myself open for every one to say that I was conscious of the justice of the application, and should therefore expose myself publicly to ridicule.'

"(Here I began to breathe.) 'Whether, by my agitation I have done so with you or not,' he continued, 'I cannot judge; it depends upon whether your mind sees anything ridiculous in the strong feelings of a man—and I may say a gentleman—under a most cruel and slanderous attack,—or whether it does not.' (How I wished myself in the river!) 'I am inclined to think,' he continued—in his measured, deliberate manner, which it seemed as if no agitation could accelerate or emphasize,—'that you would not consider such feelings subject of mirth, or contempt; and deeply, ineffaceably wounded as I have been by so foul a suspicion having ever entered your mind, I must yet so far have regard to my honour, as to enter a little into explanations which may tend to clear me from it, and to show that I am not guilty of the murderous intentions which you seem to have attributed to me.'

"He stopped, and I walked by his side in mighty embarrassment, not liking even to hear my feet brush through the grass of the meadow—for I had left the pathway wholly to him, in my humility. Perhaps he expected me to speak, and I wished to do so, but what could I say? I longed certainly to express my contrition for what I had said, but still his conduct *did* want explanation, and that checked me. At last he resumed: 'You have accused me, Mr. Bruce, in your own mind—and indeed before others too' (and here his colour mounted)—'of a crime of the blackest die—one which has ever stood foremost in the catalogue of horrors: of pretending friendship, and intending—murder! Such accusations are hard to brook; and though I might treat them with the contempt which they deserve, yet I prefer telling you that they are unjust, and unfounded. Your idea, of course is, that I procured—purposely—an appointment for Mr. St. Clair on board a vessel destined to the fatal coast of Africa; but that I did *not* do. His appointment and promotion, I am free to acknowledge, were my work; and whatever my motive may have been, a young sailor without much fortune, or any particular interest, need not I think quarrel with me for it. But the destination of his vessel was not only unknown to me at the time of his appointment, but my disturbance was so great when I learnt it, that I set off instantly for London, and stopped neither night nor day till, from the Western Highlands of Scotland I found myself within the walls of the Admiralty. I made every effort in my power to obtain an exchange of vessels,—spoke to every one whom I thought could possibly help me; till wearied, I suppose, with my importunity, I was given to understand, that the obtaining my first request was considered a great thing, and that I must not "expect to nominate to stations also." 'You know me well enough, Mr. Bruce, at least not to doubt my word; and you must therefore, I think, feel that the part of David towards Uriah I have *not* acted; and if you have received that impression from Mr. St. Clair, perhaps you will have the kindness to inform him that he has misjudged me.' 'That impression was never received from him,' Captain Normanton, I replied; 'it was my own mind, and the appearance of things, which suggested it. And indeed I am proud for St. Clair's sake to say, that whenever I have spoken in any way against your proceedings—and I have done so perhaps too much, though to him only—he has invariably spoken of you with forbearance and kindness, and blamed me for my harsh judgments.' (What a flame of emotions rushed to his face!) 'But for what I have said to-day, I feel that I ought indeed greatly to entreat your forgiveness.' 'You have it, Mr. Bruce,' he replied, with considerable feeling, 'though one of

your honourable mind may perhaps be able to form some idea of what it must have been to have had such an accusation brought against me—and before—others too.’ And he coughed nervously, and looked around as at the prospect.

“‘I do feel it, Captain Normanton,’ I replied; ‘and cannot sufficiently hate myself for having made it, or for having allowed my mind to harbour even so black a thought.’ I really did feel horrified at myself; and when he spoke with so much feeling, and so readily forgave me—and when I thought too of the effort he had made to obtain your exchange, I could not but think of your words, that ‘you could name many good things in him.’ Yet still I felt as if it would be insincere if I said nothing more and so let it be imagined that I thought he was right in all he had done, though being so much his junior—for I should think he is full ten years older than I am—I found it difficult to intrude my opinion upon him. But I could not feel satisfied without doing it, so continued: ‘Yet, Captain Normanton, if you will at this moment of explanation allow me to speak my sincere opinion, I would say that I still think your exerting yourself to get St. Clair employed abroad just now, and separating him from Miss Sydney at such a moment, must be considered as anything but a kind, or a considerate act.’

“How ghastly may a living face become! But for the glowing fire of the eye, and the convulsive contractions of the brow and lips, I should have thought that I had a corpse stalking by my side! I could not but feel for him, for it must have been a moment of riving anguish to him. He must of course have suspected your engagement with Miss Sydney before, but the word that confirms a dreaded suspicion falls on the brain like fire! I saw he could not speak; so in mercy tried to do so myself. But it was impossible to turn off the subject; so thinking that now the sword had entered, it were better to thrust it up to the hilt at once, I added, ‘You must be aware, Captain Normanton, that St. Clair is engaged to Miss Sydney.’ ‘I am aware of no such thing,’ he answered fiercely, his eye glaring from out of his ashy countenance with demoniacal fire. ‘It is the case however,’ I continued, without seeming to observe the violence of his emotion; ‘but of course, if you did not know it, that alters the case.’ I had meant to soothe his feelings by saying this, but the moment the words were out of my mouth I could not but perceive their bitter irony. I thought I saw a terrible conflict going on in his mind; but if that were the case, the better and more honourable part of his nature triumphed, and with a truthful boldness which recalled the honest blood to his cheek, he said, after a few minutes silence, ‘I have been brought, Mr. Bruce, by some strange means, into an extraor

dinary position with regard to you, and I feel that perhaps some further explanation, however disagreeable, may be necessary. Your accusation of me, though you have retracted it as to its worst features, yet evidently proves that you think I have some particular reason for wishing Mr. St. Clair's absence at this time—and I will not deny that I may have. I perceive too, that you have formed your own opinion as to what that reason is—and in that too, you are not perhaps mistaken. That I have a high regard for Miss Sydney is true; but it is also true that in what I have done I have endeavoured to study her happiness as much—at least I have meant to do so—as my own. You tell me that she is engaged to Mr. St. Clair—I ought not certainly to doubt your authority, as you are so great a friend of his' (said bitterly); 'but I can only say that, when last here, General Sydney told me positively that there was nothing settled between them; and that indeed, through losses which I was grieved to find he had sustained, he did not think it likely that anything would ever come of the "childish nonsense," as he called it, that there had been between them—I repeat his own words. This was said in answer merely to an observation I took the liberty of making, as to the strange appearance which the two families living so completely together bore, and of the conjectures which would most likely be the consequence of such an arrangement. Understanding this therefore, to be the case, you cannot charge me, I think, with acting a part hostile to Miss Sydney's interests, when I endeavour to separate her from a young man whose attachment and constant society might become dangerous to her peace.'

"He paused as if expecting me to speak, and I did so; and informed him of General Sydney's having given his formal consent to your engagement before your departure. 'Certainly,' I added, 'if your conduct had been disinterested, I should have said it might have been kind and judicious; but the feeling that a latent motive of your own lurked beneath the act cannot but alter one's estimate of it. You will forgive me for speaking so openly, Captain Normanton.' 'Oh! certainly, certainly,' he replied; though evidently much irritated and offended at my observation, at which I am not surprised. 'To separate them for a time,' I continued, 'particularly when by doing so, you would further their future prospects of marrying and being happy together, might indeed be the act of a friend—and may God grant that that be the issue!—but to seek to separate them entirely, and destroy such love as theirs—that is an act, Captain Normanton, which I could envy no man.' I had lashed myself up into quite a small storm, the waves whereof surging to and fro, were in no wise pacified by the contemptuous smile which I

saw ostentatiously exhibited on our friend's curled lip. 'You must excuse my smiling, Mr. Bruce,' said the irritating fellow (I didn't though), 'and, believe me, it is not in contempt of you or of your friend, for I am not quite ignorant of the opinions which are usually held at your age on these subjects; but trust one who is of maturer years,—that the fancies of young heads seldom sink so very deep into young hearts as you seem inclined to suppose.' (I could have murdered him—but didn't; and that ardent desire not transpiring through word or deed, he continued without interruption.) 'I can fully believe that you think me thoroughly heartless, and thoroughly selfish, but on those points my conscience entirely acquits me; and I can say with truth, that did I not think I had the means of making Miss Sydney happier than she could be by a miserable marriage with a young man without fortune, like Mr. St. Clair, I would abandon all thoughts of her for ever.—As it is, she shall at least be allowed to make her choice.' 'She has done that already, Captain Normanton,' I replied, with infinite malice and vengeance—'and irrevocably, or I am much mistaken.' 'We shall see,' he answered, with that complacent pretriumphant smile which we have often said was so utterly insufferable. I was too much irritated to speak; not, I am sorry to say, that I purposely laid any restraint on my unruly member, but that there poured in upon my mind such an *embarras de richesses* in the way of vituperation, scorn, insult, fury, invective, &c.—all which solicited clamorously to be made use of—that whilst I was running through them to select what could best suit my triple purpose of insulting him; avenging you, and relieving myself, I suddenly discovered that my temper was cooled, and that the choice moment of revenge had escaped; so finding myself silent—silent I remained. Nothing on earth, you know, subdues like silence! The 'last word' may claim its 'Ovation,' but the 'Triumph' must be invariably decreed to the 'first silence.' It drops like lead on your opponent; who, expecting resistance, finds it not, and falls to the ground. He strives to raise himself, to explain, to soften off, to retract, to conciliate;—while the consciousness of your quiet scrutiny makes him sink deeper and deeper into the mire. Yet I envy not the man who can systematically pursue this plan of subjugation,—who can calmly, in supposed superiority, watch the struggles of another, and enjoy his confusion. I have as much respect for the brute who can bear to subdue an animal to his own fantastic ways, by starving it and keeping it from rest. No! I prefer a thousand times the man whose vehemence lays him open to blame on every side; and would rather help an adversary to all his excuses, and *through* all his difficulties, than take the cool-blooded station and callous feelings of the other for a

moment. Involuntarily, therefore, it was, that on this occasion that station was assumed by me (and that by reason of hot, not cold-bloodedness). But the effect was the same on the unhappy Captain, who began explaining away his confidence, and frittering away his hopes, and his feelings, and his wishes, till he left his moral self the most threadbare skeleton in creation. His excuses however, though I could not but perceive their sophistry, left me at least with the full persuasion of his really strong attachment to Miss Sydney, and of his willingness to devote every energy of his life to her happiness (according to his own ideas and fashions). So, vexed and troubled as I was, I could not help feeling and speaking more kindly to him than I had been able to do before. And so we parted!

"You need not I am sure fear anything more for Miss Sydney than the annoyance of his assiduities—though that is bad enough. Indeed, what can you fear when you have her father's word, and her heart? England is a land of liberty, and happily not of the license it was a century ago,—and chaises and four and men in masks are at a discount. So rest in peace, brave son of Neptune! 'Give trouble to the winds—hope and be undismayed!' As long as I am on shore I shall keep a sharp look-out ahead and let you know how things go on; and it is not for me to bid you raise your trusting eye to a Higher and Greater Watcher,—Watcher and Ruler too! I have little more to say, for of common news I have none, and for it you care nothing; and methinks, I need not make excuses for not having done justice even to an 'Office frank;' for if your anchor is a-peak when you begin this portentous epistle, it will probably be stuck fast in the pleasant mud of the Bight of Benin before you have finished it.

"Ever yours,

"NORMAN BRUCE."

CHAPTER XXV.

The intolerant world might have its evil-speaking hushed into silence before the devout might which labours for the hire, not of silver and gold, but of saved souls,—and the sunny godliness which is loftiest gain.—*Arranged from "Merkland."*

It was in vain, after reading Bruce's letter, that I tried, as he had told me, to "give trouble to the winds;" they would not take it, or if they did, it was only to blow it back again with twofold violence to my heart. I had not yet attained the blessing of a thoroughly trustful spirit, and my mind tormented itself with wilfully imagining evil to the being I loved so well. Her letter lay by me unopened—unremembered indeed, for a time—so absorbed was I in troublous thoughts about herself; but at length, remembering it, I snatched it up with repentant haste, and eagerly read its soothing, cheering words. She knew nothing of course of Captain Normanton's communication to Bruce; but she could fully feel from his manner, that he had by no means given up his former intentions with regard to herself. But annoying as this was, she felt confident she said, of her own heart and of the love and mercy of God; and she spoke in bright and joyful words of the happiness of our reunion, and of the blessedness of our being one in heart even then. She talked of the sunny cottage we were to have when I returned, the flowers we were to cultivate, the books we were to read, the godly works of mercy we were to do together—till my heart glowed within me at the bright picture that she drew, and my eager fancy placed already half within my grasp its enchanting happiness.

Yet after a time, I could not but think that beneath this veil of radiant colouring which she had thrown over the future, there lay a deep depression in her heart; and though I grieved to think it should be so, I could not but the more admire the disinterestedness of that love which strove rather to comfort me than to obtain sympathy for its own troubles, and I determined that neither her efforts nor her example should be lost upon me. I therefore—after impulsively thanking my God for giving her such strength, and blessing me with the love of such a being—sat down to write to her in the same strain of animated hope; and cheered and strengthened by the effort which God enabled me to make, I finished my whole letter without one complaint or one murmuring expression, though the thought that it was

the last which for years I should write to her from England almost at times overcame my resolution.

With Bruce I could not so well sustain my efforts at cheerfulness. I thanked him however a thousand times for his kindness, and for his promise of watching over Mary's happiness, and letting me know how things went on,—a promise which I valued now more than ever, as I saw plainly by Mary's letter, that should any trouble arise to her, she would be cautious not to mention it, so that she might be suffering—sorely suffering, while I was hoping that all was well and prospering with her.

My letters concluded, I went to my cabin, and commending myself to God, slept the dreamless sleep which is so often in mercy granted to those whose waking hours are sad; and having obtained leave to go on shore the next morning—we were to sail in the evening—the rising sun found me once more treading the smooth lawns of Mount Edgcombe—once more enjoying its mild air and exquisite scenery. I gathered a flower, one of the “pale perishing” flowers of autumn, and on my return to the ship I put it into my letter to Mary, telling her to keep it till I should redeem it with more glowing flowers from sunnier lands. Then sealing and despatching my letters, I was soon busily engaged in my part of the bustling business of getting the ship under way.

There was scarcely a ripple on the water and we moved but slowly, so that England was still in sight the next morning. But before nightfall I saw, from the masthead, the last dim line that marked where my country lay, sink down, down into the leaden ocean. It was like burying my dead, and I felt desolate indeed!

“Taking a last look of the old land, sir?” said Lawrence, who had seen me go up aloft, and watched till I lighted on deck again.

“Yes, Lawrence; she's fairly down now. May God's blessing rest on her, and on those we love in her.”

“Amen, sir,” said the old man, reverentially; “no one can blame one for blessing the land where one is born, nor the friends who are friends to us in it. It is but natur'.”

“It is nature, and duty too,” I replied. “But what do you mean by ‘friends who are friends?’ those who are not friends, are not friends, are they?”

“Ah! you're too sharp upon me, Mr. St. Clair,” said the old man good-humouredly, with a sly sideways nod of the head,—“too sharp by half; but I take it, you know pretty well what I mean too.”

"Why, I rather think I do," I said; "at least I suppose you mean that those who stand in the place of friends are not always friendly, and that you would ask a blessing only on those who were so."

"That's it, sir, right enough," he replied; "and that I say again, is natur'."

"It may be," I observed; "but a better Teacher than nature tells us to do more than that, Lawrence. We are told to 'love our enemies,' and to 'bless them that curse us.'"

"Well, sir, that's very good—and I've nothing to say against it, as to the matter of talk; but I'm doubtful as to how I should set about a-doing it."

"Why, it is rather difficult to be sure," I replied; and a sigh arose as I felt how difficult it was! "But great things are said to encourage us to it: 'That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven;' 'and if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.' These are great promises for such as you and me, Lawrence."

"Yes, sir, they are mighty-sounding promises, indeed. And yet I can't rightly say as I understand what they mean. I am but a poor scholard, Mr. St. Clair, and haven't but little book-larnin', more's the pity."

"More's the pity indeed, for it is a great thing to be able to read, and get one's head and heart supplied from the stores of wiser minds, especially from the full abundant store of the word of God."

"Why as to that I can read pretty smartly in the Testament too; but I han't got no time you see, let alone having no Bible here on board."

"Did you read it much when you were on shore?"

"I can't say, sir, as I did—much; my wife—she that's gone, poor soul!—was always a begging me to read it, and read it, and I did so two or three times to pleasure her. But bless you! I couldn't understand it, you see; and there was but little profit nor pleasure in going over and over what might a'most ha' been Chineese for me."

"Couldn't you understand what you read?"

"I could make out the words, sir—least-ways many of 'em; but I couldn't no how make out what it was all about. Why, if you was to go and listen to a shipmate in the midst of his yarn, he might spin it as long as he would, but if you didn't know the beginnin' of it, you'd never rightly understand the end."

"That's true; but have you never had any instruction as to the things of God? You've at least been to the service every Sunday on board, and that must have taught you something."

"Well, it may have taught me a summut, sir; for I'm not

quite like the Hindoos or Joss-worshippers neither; I know better than that too. I know there is but one God, and that Jesus Christ is His Son, as they say; but any more than that I can't say as I see my way through at all. I often wonder indeed, why our chaplains and such sort, don't talk plainer for us poor fellows, and explain matters a little more—it would do a power of good! I've been a church-goer now, on sea and land, these sixty years pretty nigh, and yet I comes out of church knowing no more than when I goes into it, and the same may be said of scores and scores of us; and it will be a hard thing and weary work when death comes on, to have to travel a road not one step of which one knows. It's different with you young gentlemen; you've fine larnin' given you, and a power of masters and teachers from the time you can speak. And yet I'm minded sometimes, that after all, some of you aren't much better neither, than we poor ignorant seamen. I'm not speaking of you, Mr. St. Clair, as you well know sir, nor of many others; but some, I think you must see yourself, sir,—no offence I hope,—isn't much the better of the larnin' they've got."

"That is because the right beginning was not made with them, Lawrence, more than with you. No knowledge can make the heart right but the knowledge of the ways, and the will, and, above all, the love of God. I can speak to that from experience, for till very lately,—till last year indeed,—I cannot say that I really knew anything clearly of Christ's holy religion."

"But you was never a wild 'un like many of the others neither," said the old man, looking at me with a kind sort of respect in his mild countenance.

"And who is a better or a steadier seaman than you, Lawrence?" I said, smiling, in answer to his kindly look; "and yet you say you still want the teaching which I wanted too before?"

The colour deepened in the old seaman's swarthy cheek as he answered my compliment with a little bow of natural courtesy, and a smile of rather sad expression.

"I thank ye, sir, you was always one of a kind speech; but somehow that'll not do, as my old woman, God bless her! used to say—there's summut amiss yet. Hauling a rope taut, or standing to your guns like a man, can't 'arn heaven for you no hows; I can't have so poor a thought of it as that comes to, let it be how it will."

"I am heartily glad you haven't," I replied. "If you had, I should feel that there were but little hopes for you; but now I think you're in a fair way of getting what you want."

"How so, sir?" he said, withdrawing his eye from the

horizon, which, with the habitual watchfulness of a sailor he had been instinctively examining during most of our conversation, and fixing it suddenly on me; "sure I scarce knows what I do want."

"I can tell you though I think. You want to hear something that you can understand about God, and you want to know how you can get your sins pardoned;—you want to feel at ease about all this, and comfortable in your mind. Isn't that it?"

"Why yes, sir, you've hit it pretty nigh, I believe," said the old man with an animated air; "and if you can tell me how to get these things, why I shall be uncommon glad, and will thank you kindly too."

"I will try what I can do," I said; "but I'm afraid I shall be but a poor master, for I am only a poor learner as yet myself. However if it be but a little, that's better than nothing: so what I shall first say shall be in the words of the blessed Lord Himself: 'Ask, and ye shall receive.' Have you ever asked God to teach you, Lawrence?"

"I can't say as I have, sir," he answered; "nor do I rightly know how to."

"If I had promised to give you anything you wanted, shouldn't you know how to ask me for it?"

"To be sure I should."

"Do just the same then to God; ask him with your heart, as you would speak to a friend in secret. Just say, 'O Lord teach me to know and love Thee,' and look for His answer in yourself, and in things about you. He will not speak Himself to you in any miraculous way, but will speak through the voices of other people, and through books which you may read, and through the comfort He will send into your heart. Voices of men and books are instruments which He uses; but unless He make your heart ready and willing to listen and learn, they will be of no use to you."

"That sounds reasonable," he replied. "So I'm to ask Him to give me power to understand, and then I'm to listen to those who will teach me—to you Mr. St. Clair, sir, if you'll be so good."

"Yes; but you must always remember and ask God to teach you as to whether what I say is truth or not, for I may be mistaken. If you trust to Him, He will be sure to lead you right."

I then spoke to him as well as I was able of his own fallen state through sin, and of God's mercy in sending a Saviour—of that Saviour's love in dying for him, and of the pleasure of working for such a friend; and it was touching to see how the old man

listened to words which for the first time bore a distinct meaning to his mind and brought a softening feeling to his heart. I spoke on till my own soul kindled with the high themes of which I treated; and as I enlarged on the love which made Christ "while we were yet sinners, die for us," and saw the tears gather slowly in the old man's dim blue eye as he listened, I seemed to enter into the apostle's feelings of apparently surprised enthusiasm when he exclaimed, "Herein is love!"

That conversation, and others which I had with Lawrence and with some of my messmates, were of great use to me; and I fully felt the truth of the words, "They that water shall themselves be watered." I felt my own soul grow in grace, and strength, and love; and by so often speaking of the free salvation of Christ, I found my own soul opening to understand that blessed doctrine, and though I could not yet dare to take it to myself, yet I began to understand somewhat of the abiding peace of Mary's, and the rapturous joy of Bruce's spirit, under the conviction of it, and besought that, like them, I too might learn fully to rejoice in God my Saviour.

CHAPTER XXVI.

But more—thy billows and thy depths have more;
 High hearts and brave are gather'd to thy breast;
 They hear not now the booming waters roar,
 The battle-thunders cannot break their rest:
 Keep thy red gold, and gems, thou stormy grave,
 Give back the true and brave.

To thee the love of woman hath gone down;
 Dark roll thy waves o'er manhood's noble head;
 O'er youth's bright locks, and beauty's flow'ry crown,—
 Yet must thou hear a voice: "Restore the dead."
 Earth shall reclaim her precious things of thee;
 Give back the dead, thou sea!

MRS. HEMANS.

We sailed pleasantly before the wind for some time, and congratulated ourselves on having calm weather through the generally stormy Bay of Biscay. But it did not, unfortunately, last long; for just as we were clearing the bay and rounding Cape Finisterre, the wind chopped round full in our teeth, and after heading us for some days, blew such a gale as I think I never saw in my life.

We could not show a stitch of canvass but what it was split

into ribbons in a moment; not a man of us took off our dripping and drenched clothes for upwards of three days and nights. Our foremast went by the board, and had nearly carried me with it; but old Lawrence saw it coming, and having always of late, the good old man! had a special eye to me when he could, he seized me from behind by the collar of my jacket, and with rough, but saving violence, jerked me away with a force that stretched me my whole length on the deck. I lay stunned for a moment, but was roused almost immediately by a tremendous shock, which made the whole ship quiver from her bows to her stern. I started up just as every one else almost fell flat down,—for we had been forced to put the helm up, and let the vessel run before the wind, and she had been ploughing through the waters at such a furious rate, that the sudden check overthrew everything. We thought all was over with us. It seemed evident that we had struck upon a rock, and it was equally evident that we must go down. The ship being stuck fast offered of course an infinitely greater resistance to the on-coming waves than when driven before the wind; and they now struck her with such force, that it seemed a miracle that she hung together for a moment.

We had previously fired guns as signals of distress, but now they were all quite useless. Consternation sat on every face, and happy indeed was he who had not then his "faith to seek." Trial enough it was for those whose anchor for eternity was cast on safe shores, but what it must have been for others one dare not think! My first feeling was heart-lifting thankfulness that Mary was not there; my second, one of agony, lest I should be lost to her. Then succeeded a wonderful calm, a peaceful giving up of myself, and her, and everything, to the good governance of God—to His gracious keeping. The thorough feeling that "love ruled might"—left no room for fear within my heart.

The happiness of that moment of perfect trust I can never forget; nor can words convey the idea of it to another. I had not sought it, but had merely power passively to receive the impressions which God was pleased to make upon my mind; but never can I be sufficiently grateful that they were of a nature not only to afford me such strength and peace then, but to be a perpetual source of thankful enjoyment whenever their blessed remembrance returned upon my soul.

I have often since felt this same unsought supernatural peace and quietude poured into my heart under circumstances of exciting trouble,—but never to the same degree as then.

I was soon, however, roused to a fresh sense of the fearful strait we were in by the rough grasp of old Lawrence's iron hand. He shook mine as if bidding me farewell, though the old

habits of discipline and respect, mixing curiously with the feeling of equality produced by a common danger, made him beg my pardon for doing so.

"It's all right, with you, sir," he added, "and I feel somehow as if it was with me too.—God bless you, sir! God bless you for teaching me the way to Heaven! And if I get there, as I hope, through the blessed Lord, it will be pleasant to thank you for it there again—and for ever."

I wrung the old man's hand in silence, for my soul was for the moment overpowered at the idea he presented before it, of his being for ever grateful to me for his salvation. I could have prostrated myself in devoted adoration before God; and I felt an almost delirious gratitude—enhanced by the terror of that dread hour—at thinking that the soul of this humble, childlike Christian might be saved through my instrumentality—"snatched as a brand from the burning," or (which image, as may be supposed, came with peculiar force to me at that moment) caught up as a drowning wretch from the whelming waters. "Oh, the riches both of the depths and of the heights of redeeming love!" Oh! the ineffable power of God, which at such a moment could transport the soul into regions of happiness which in securer hours we might seek for long in vain!

After a few moments, Lawrence again spoke, though it was with difficulty that his voice could be heard amid the din and clash of noises which surrounded us. We were all clinging to the rigging, or lashed to other parts of the vessel to save ourselves from being washed overboard, for every mountain-wave that came broke over us, and swept the deck from stem to stern.

"There's no saying you know, sir," he began, "how these sort of things may turn out, and you may get ashore while I go to the bottom; if so, you'll remember the lad, at Mrs. Storer's, No. 25, Paradise Court, Pancrass. His father, and mother, and gra'mother's dead, and the old man will be gone then, too; and he is but a slip of a lad, and never was a strong 'un, and a helping hand, or a kind word even, does a deal o' good sometimes when the heart is down as his is like to be. He took on dreadful bad when my poor woman went, but then he had me with him; but now—all alone——"

The old man turned away, for his voice was choked. I assured him, that should God spare my life, I would always keep an eye upon the boy. He nodded in grateful acknowledgment; but he feared to speak, I think, lest his pent-up feelings should give way. I said a few cheering words, and after a while, recovering himself, he began again, but with great hesitation:—

"If it should be t'other way, sir—for no one knows how these things may chance—and I should be the one to be spared—if there was anything I could do for you, Mr. St. Clair, I should be proud and happy to do it;—that is—not happy, like—for I pray the Lord it may not be so—but ready, you know, sir,—glad to pleasure you, if there were anything you might wish."

"Thank you, Lawrence," I replied. "These greedy waters will never give up my body I suspect, if once they get it, but if by any chance it should be found, I should wish you to take this ring off my finger, and my letter-case from my pocket, and let Miss Sydney have them, when you could, and give this picture round my neck to my dear mother; tell her it was what I loved best on earth, of things not living—so sent it to her."

As I said this, the thought of what the sorrow of the two beings I loved so much would be, rushed so fearfully over my mind, that it overwhelmed me for a moment. My head sunk upon my arm, and a storm of uncontrollable anguish heaved my breast; but it was a suffering too deep for tears, and found vent only in groans of mortal agony.

"Don't take on, sir," said the old seaman, in a hoarse voice; "I'll do it, please God, though I pray the Lord I mayn't have it to do. But am I to say never a word from you to the young lady? Nothing but the ring and the pocket-book?"

"Nothing—nothing," I replied hastily; "our hearts are one, old man, and she will know what I would say."

At that moment there was a cry that the dead-lights were stove in, and the water pouring in torrents into the captain's cabin.

All then gave themselves up for lost; and the frantic shrieks of despair, mingled with oaths and curses, which sounded on every side—joined to the creaking and groaning of the timbers, the raving of the winds, and furious tumult of the waters—made it seem as if we were in the infernal regions. It was in vain that I tried to speak a word of peace and faith to those near me—the God whom they had despised in the day of safety, they seemed to find an insane joy in blaspheming in their hour of peril; and such horror seized me at hearing their fearful oaths as almost took away every particle of my strength.

The only being to whom my words seemed of any comfort was young Somerville, who, crouched down by my side, was clinging to me with one hand, whilst the other was clasped over his eyes, as though, with the sight, he could shut out also the sense of danger. Through his slight fingers however, the tears trickled fast, as he rocked himself from side to side, murmuring with his touching, childish voice, "If I could only have seen him again!—if I could only have seen him once more!"

Well did I feel who that "him" was; and the yearning love of this young heart touched me to the very soul. I bade him not despair, but pray to God to love and to protect him for His sake who, when on the raging waters said "Peace," and they obeyed Him; and as he listened to my words, the mournful cry of his heart ceased, and he answered, "I will—I will."

Lowering the boats was out of the question—they could not have lived a moment in such a sea. But as long as there was life, there was hope; so I lashed the boy to a coop that was near, and bid him do what he could to save himself, and then trust himself to the mercy of God. All this takes long in telling, but occupied but few minutes in doing.

Lawrence had disappeared from my side. I had been busied with Edward Somerville, so had not seen what had become of him; but on looking round I just caught a glimpse of his weather-beaten head disappearing down the hatchway. I started forward to follow him, for I understood in a moment what was the forlorn-hope on which he had bravely volunteered, and I determined to lessen his danger, if possible, by sharing it. But the Captain bade me stay where I was.

"There are hands enough for the work," he said, "if it can be done; if not——"

I then found that four other men had been ordered below to help Lawrence, and I had nothing to do but to wait the anxious result like the rest. I went back to Somerville, who had been in despair when he saw me leave his side, and told him he must rouse his spirits and try to look boldly on the danger, or he would never be ready, if called on, to venture his life as that brave old seaman had done. This animated him a little; but he was so young!—scarcely twelve years old—and so slight and weakly! Oh! parents little know what they do when they send their children out on such hard services. It was far worse, as I have said before, in those days—fifteen years ago—than it is now, and boys were sent out at an earlier age; but it is bad enough even now, God knows!

The moments seemed like ages as we waited to see if the men below succeeded in their bold attempt; but many had not passed, when a man who had secured himself in amongst the mizen shrouds exclaimed that "one of them had been washed out of the cabin-window," the sad truth of which was in a few moments more fearfully confirmed by the body being borne towards us on the crest of a huge wave, and cast with frightful force on the deck, half hid in a shroud of froth and foam. Though we all had to cling on to the ship for our lives, yet many an effort was made to catch the body as it passed and save it from the fury of the waters; but in vain! and horrible it was

to see it thrown about, and dashed against the masts and sides, striking against first one thing, then another, as the retreating waters dragged it over again.

The moment I saw it I knew it to be Lawrence's body; and I might have been certain too, by the tranquillity of the features, and the helpless manner in which it rolled over and over in the waters—the long thin hair now swept across the face, and now streaming back from the high daring brow—that the spirit of the brave old man was not there, but at peace. Yet when once again the body—now sinking, now floating—was borne past us in the sea, and thrown against the ship's side close to me as I was still standing on the waist near Somerville, I lost all thought of everything but saving him, and loosing my hold of the vessel, I caught at his clothes as he passed, and was in a moment dragged overboard with him.

What a shriek came from Edward Somerville as he saw me go over!—piercing, in the shrillness of his child's voice, through all the roaring and raving of the storm; for what can drown the cry of human agony?

But soon the gurgling waters as they poured in at my ears and down my gasping throat, choked all sense and hearing. I was a good swimmer, but what could human arms avail against such a sea—against such waves, breaking as they did against the vessel, and rushing back with such fury against the other waters as sent their clashing heads curling to the very sky, while around them was a chaos of foaming eddies and whirlpools? Exertion was vain, and human strength as nought! A moment's struggling, a moment's frightful, frantic agony, one gasp—another—and another—and the green waters had closed above my head; and then came a sensation of indescribable peace, and a bright glory flitted before me, mingled with visions of green fields, and meadows, and calm waters; then sleep—sleep—sleep.

[As much of the narrative following the events just recorded could not have been circumstantially known to Mr. St. Clair, it is thought best to relate it as received from other sources.]

CHAPTER XXVII.

Fearful each sight and terrible each sound
We witness'd then ; yet in that hour we found
Hope's sure and steadfast anchor to the soul ;
Mortal with immortality was crown'd,
And the blest spirit sought its glorious goal
Where blasts can never rave, nor angry billows roll.

BERNARD BARTON.

WHEN the men who had gone below with Lawrence witnessed his dreadful fate, they rushed out of the cabin in mad despair, and breaking open the spirit-room, soon lost all sense of danger in frantic inebriation. They staggered on deck with cans of spirits ; which they distributed to the rest, and in a moment all was wild disorder. The voices of the officers were exerted in vain—all subordination was at an end. Many of them rolling about the deck, or lying in helpless intoxication, were swept overboard ; while others rushing below, drank till they fell dead upon the spot, or were drowned by the waters which rushed in in torrents between the decks.

The Captain felt that all hope was gone ; but his courage never deserted him, and he continued with admirable coolness to give his orders to such of the crew as still remained able and willing to obey them. Every instant seemed the last ; the vessel was fast filling, and had she not been kept up by the rocks beneath, she must soon have settled and gone down. At length the vast weight of water in the lower deck proved too much for her timbers to sustain, and crash went the whole after-part of the vessel, the masts rolling over with a force which sent the sheeted spray up to the very clouds, and involving in their fall multitudes of the hapless men. But a few now remained, and Captain Seymour saw, with unspeakable horror, that Edward Somerville was not amongst them. He had felt a father's kindness for the boy ; and his loss overcoming the firmness which had stood all the rest, he burst into an agony of tears.

Suddenly, almost as by miracle, the wind fell, and a long streak of light appeared on the western horizon. Quickly it spread ; and the clouds lifting like a curtain, the splendid beams of the setting sun shone fiercely across the heaving ocean, lighting up with sad and mocking glory the remnants of the miserable wreck, and falling on a rugged shore, which Captain Seymour instantly recognized as that of the Bay of Vigo.

Hope now sprung up in every breast; but soon the sun had sunk, and the evening shades had darkened into night. They had no means of raising a signal or of striking a light, and at length their despair rose again to frenzy. Some dashed them down upon the deck in agony of spirit; while others, with yells of execration, cursed God and all around them.

"Silence there!" cried the Captain, gloomily, when he heard those horrid sounds; "don't tempt the devil to do worse by us than he has done already!"

But his voice had lost all power over those desperate men; and horrible to say, in the midst of their frantic oaths, part of the remainder of the deck gave way, and most of them were suddenly whelmed in the black waters. In the utter darkness they could do nothing to save themselves; and after a few gasps of agony, some—curses mingling with the bubbling waters as they closed over their heads—went down to endless night,—some perished, calling with frantic energy on God, and some—one only—breathed forth words of peace and holy trust, till gently he sank to those dark depths which for him were illumined by a Saviour's presence!

Of all the crew, two only now remained upon the wreck: the Captain, and an old Irish seaman, the most reprobate of them all; and a horrifying silence having succeeded to the shrieks and cries of the drowning, each was seized with the terrific fear that he was the last, sole-living, among the drifting dead! Neither of them for a time durst speak, lest this dreadful fear should be confirmed. At length, an unconscious groan burst from Captain Seymour.

"Avast there!" shouted the old seaman in a voice of horror, his superstitious fancy conjuring up the idea that possibly the spirits of the unsheeted dead might be keeping unwelcome watch by his side.

"Who's that?" exclaimed the Captain, in his turn.

"Tim Connor!" answered the half-intoxicated man, ending with the ordinary seaman's oath.

"For God's sake," exclaimed Captain Seymour, "let's have no more of that, there is no need to brave God any further. Ah!" he murmured, "it is said: 'Because of swearing the land mourneth;' and surely one might add: 'Because of swearing the sea devoureth.'"

But he felt that it was waste of time at that moment, to say more to the obdurate and wretched infidel beside him; but deeply struck by the events that had passed, he mutely through the darkness, looked up to heaven, though he knew not

what to ask or what to say. His spirit felt its deep need, while scarcely knowing what he needed; but the inarticulate appeal was understood by Him in whose hand are the hearts of all men, and his spirit felt soothed and strengthened.

Then there came back upon his mind the remembrance of a conversation of Mr. St. Clair's with Lawrence, which he had happened to overhear, in which the former had told the old seaman, that "without the teaching of the Holy Spirit, nothing could do the soul good;" and though it had passed unheeded at the time—for his mind was then totally indifferent on those subjects—yet now, roused and shaken out of his lethargy, the contrast of his own sensations with the hardened recklessness of Connor made him think of the forgotten words, and a trembling hope arose that he might, at that fearful hour, be for the first time under the blessed teaching of the Holy Spirit. Storm and death, and the waters and the winds, were for the moment forgotten!

"Light ahoy!" suddenly shouted Connor in a voice of ecstasy, starting to his feet.

Not a word was spoken—the anxiety was too intense. But then, they saw the light diverging from the straight course, stopping now here—now there. Why did it not come on to them? The suspense was maddening!

Captain Seymour maintained his outward calm as he intently watched it; but Connor frantically raged and stormed, when, stamping with reckless fury on the quivering deck, it gave way, and he was gone in a moment! He caught at some broken boards, which saved him from falling at once into the sea; but he felt them yielding with his weight and slipping from his numbed hands. Lower and lower he went, till the chill waters dashed around his feet—lower and lower, till he sunk and rose with their heaving motion. The crumbling boards escaped from his grasp, and he hung but by a piece of iron which had caught his clothes. He shrieked aloud, imploring the captain for the "love of God and his precious soul, not to let him drown, and burn in hell!"

He continued calling out in frightful agony whenever the drowning waters would let him speak, while Captain Seymour was devising means of helping him. The clouds had become broken, and between their dark masses the waning moon occasionally illumined the scene of horror which surrounded them. The waves were literally strewn with dead bodies and broken pieces of the wreck; yet the most fearful sight of all was Connor's convulsed face, as he hung quivering between life and death.

Captain Seymour scarcely dared stir, lest the disjointed boards should give way with him too; but at last he contrived to throw a rope to the drowning man. Connor seized it with the eagerness of despair; but as he endeavoured to raise himself by it, he unhooked his clothes from the piece of iron that had before sustained him, when failing to get footing on the vessel, he fell back with such force that Captain Seymour was dragged down with the jerk, and whelmed with him in the waters.

Connor was by this time quite exhausted, and Captain Seymour's strength could ill suffice to support them both. He had given up all hope of the boat, not having seen its light for some time; but his joy may be conceived, when just at that moment it came suddenly round from behind the vessel which had hid it from sight, the ruddy glare from the lantern at the bow gleaming strangely on his death-like face.

"Here! for the love of God!" he gasped.

Connor was past speaking.

The boatmen strained every nerve, and the bent oars quivered in the air, as they sent the flashing spray in every direction. But all efforts for a time seemed vain, for the tangled masses of wreck which they encountered impeded their passage on every side.

Captain Seymour's strength was almost spent, yet he could not quit his hold of the poor seaman, nor bear to consign such a soul to perdition; but one of the boatmen seeing his exhausted state, threw himself into the sea, and dashing the waters from him on each side with the furious force of his sinewy arms, he reached the spot just as Captain Seymour was sinking, and catching and supporting him, he tranquilly waited till the boat drew near. Then assisting the others to raise him and lay him with Connor at the bottom of the boat, he flung himself in, nothing wearied, and seizing an oar, helped the search after any others that might be left. None however remained on or near the wreck, so the boat's head was quickly turned again towards shore.

They were pulling steadily on, when a cry was heard at a little distance. The course of the boat was instantly changed, and again the straining oars sent her like an arrow through the waters. Up hill down dale, she might be said to go, with the speed of a courser, for the sea was still rolling on in high and heavy ridges, though the wind had fallen. At length she suddenly stopped, and the men shouted in the darkness. An answer was faintly given; but feeble as it was, Captain Seymour instantly recognized the voice of Edward Somerville.

Energy sprung into his heart at that unexpected, but most welcome sound; and spite of his weakness he started up, and

with intense anxiety watched till the boy was lifted safely over the boat's side. He then made signs to the men to place him by him, away from Connor's chill body; and with overflowing thankfulness, and with almost a mother's tenderness, he held him to his breast. The poor boy had recognized him immediately; and overcome by the knowledge of their mutual safety, and by all the exciting emotions of the moment, he wept the quiet tears of joy and weakness on the kind heart which supported him, till at length his heavy breathing told that he slept, soundly slept—rocked by the billows which had threatened so lately to be his grave.

It seemed that the precaution Mr. St. Clair had taken of lashing him to the coop, had been the means of saving him; for he had been sustained by that frail support, till happening to be drifted near one of the floating masts, he found a sailor there, who assisted him to get on it, and who supplied him with some spirits which kept the life in him through the piercing cold of that stormy night. The poor sailor having taken too much of them himself, fell asleep, and was washed off the mast in the darkness, sinking without sigh or struggle into the depths beneath.

Arrived at last on shore, the sailors carried their rescued charges from the boat to a rude hut close at hand, and there laid them before a blazing wood fire, whose cheerful glow sent a tingling pleasure through the shivering frames of Captain Seymour and young Somerville; while an old woman who seemed expert in those things, commenced chafing the body of Connor, and resorted to various expedients for restoring animation.

All efforts however, seemed vain; and the old woman at last rose from her stooping posture, and wiped the heat from her face and brow, while the men shrugged their shoulders and continued pityingly to gaze upon the body.

All of a sudden, the eyes opened so unexpectedly and with such a ghastly brightness, as to startle those who thought they had been looking on a corpse. The distended eyes glared round for a moment on every one with wild affright, then closed convulsively. Again they opened, and again closed, more as if affected by galvanism than by natural life. The men, instead of offering further help, hung back and drew together round the old woman, struck with superstitious dread of the strange apparition before them, and ceaselessly crossing themselves, and muttering Aves and Paters, in their Spanish *patois*. A loud groan then issued from the body, at which men and women all

fled, rushing out of the hut with such haste and confusion, that some were thrown down in the struggle, while others trampled upon them in their alarm.

Captain Seymour had been watching with intense interest the efforts made for Connor's resuscitation; but when he saw the panic into which the poor fishermen were thrown and witnessed their rapid pell-mell flight, he could not help laughing, spite of the solemn sensations that had filled his mind, and spite of his still oppressive weakness.

The poor people who were scrambling up as fast as they could, on hearing this fresh noise within the hut fled with redoubled speed, convinced that some malignant demon had possessed itself of the body of the drowned, and was making merry at their expense.

Another groan from Connor soon recalled Captain Seymour from his hysterical mirth, and he asked his fellow-sufferer how he was.

There was no answer, but groan after groan burst forth. Captain Seymour spoke again, and repeatedly; and at last, in a voice which, spite of its weakness, betrayed the torture of his mind, Connor exclaimed:

"And is it you that are here too, Captain dear? Faith! I'd never 'a brought you here wi' me could I 'a helped it, anyhow."

"I am thankful that we are here," replied the Captain; "and we have much reason to praise God for His mercy."

"Is it praising Him, ye'd say? And isn't it I as would be glad to do that same, so He'd take me outo' this place and gi' me another chance, anyhow."

"Why, where do you think you are?"

"Is it thinking I am," replied the wretched man, "when I seed the red divils around me but this minute, and have the roaring hell-flames now a-dancin' afore my eyes?"

"Do you fancy yourself in hell?" said Captain Seymour, his blood running cold at the bare idea. "No! we have been saved from drowning, Connor, and this is the hut of those who saved us, and it was they who were standing round you trying to bring the life back into you again."

"Truth for ye, cap'n dear, and sure ye don't say so?" exclaimed the stricken man. "By the powers thin, but the Lord's been gracious to me, anyhow, the sinner that I am!" And he clasped his hands together, as the tears flowed from his closed eyes.

"He has been most gracious to both of us," said Captain Seymour, greatly moved; "and may we never forget His mercy!"

The alarmed inmates of the hut were soon again seen cautiously looking through the open door but still at some little distance as if fearing to behold some frightful apparition; and with them there were now two persons of superior rank who advanced towards the house without hesitation.

The wild, shaggy looks of the peasants contrasted strangely with the polished appearance of their new companions; and as Captain Seymour looked at them, he could without much difficulty understand how, in that dark cabin, with the red fierce glare of the wood fire falling on their shaggy hair and uncouth figures, poor Connor's affrighted imagination might picture them as fiends and demons.

The elder of the gentlemen who now appeared, addressed Captain Seymour in foreign English, and expressed in the kindest manner his sympathy with his sufferings and misfortunes; adding, that having received information from some of the peasants of his rescue, he had ordered his carriage to come down and take him to his house.

The carriage arriving at that moment, the fishermen, whose fears had subsided on seeing that the supposed demoniac had done no despite or bodily mischief to those who had first entered, again came forward to offer their services, and while they, with rough but tender-hearted care, were assisting Captain Seymour and Connor to leave the hut, the younger of the strangers, with the utmost gentleness, raised young Somerville in his arms and placed him in the carriage, where he supported him during the short journey with so much care, that not for a moment was he roused from his deep sleep.

When they arrived at the château, they all sought the repose so much needed; but the extreme anxiety as well as fatigue which Captain Seymour had undergone, soon showed its fearful effects by bringing on a violent attack of brain fever. For several days he was in great danger, and for some time afterwards continued too weak and ill for it to be possible for him to attempt his return to England, as no vessel could be found that was likely to undertake the voyage at that stormy season, and the journey overland could not be thought of for him; but one of the other officers who had been saved (few, alas! in number), was despatched to take home the heavy tidings of the disaster which had occurred, the others remaining behind, as the unsettled state of the country at that time made travelling both difficult and dangerous.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Tell her my love, inviolably true,
No change, no diminution ever know ;
Lo ! her bright image pendent on my neck,
Is all Palemon rescued from the wreck ;
Take it—and say, when panting on the wave,
I struggled life, and this alone to save.

FALCONER'S SHIPWRECK.

PREVIOUS to the events recorded in the last chapter, the humane fishermen of that rugged coast, having heard the signals of distress which were fired from the ship, had eagerly watched for the first favourable moment to launch their boats on the seething sea, and had been enabled to save some of the sufferers who had floated away from the wreck. These they brought to the hut on the shore early in that stormy night, when the bright logs, whose red glare afterwards struck such terror into old Connor's soul, shone on a group that might have been worthy of the pencil of a Rembrandt.

The rescued men lay there ghastly and forlorn, with little covering, and with their matted hair still streaming with water ; one with his back resting against the mud wall which formed the side of the huge chimney, his head drooping helplessly upon his athletic shoulder—another with his limbs twisted and curled together, as if cramped by the hand of death, while several others lay strewn about in various attitudes of helpless exhaustion. In the midst, just in front of the fire, stretched in his slight but fine proportions, lay one whom all mourned as dead. Pity it was, they thought, that one so beautiful, so young, and but now so full of life, should by the sudden rage of the tempest be laid so low ! For the others they had hope—but here all aid seemed vain. The finely-formed mouth, just shaded by the first downy marks of manhood, wore indeed a gracious smile as if in a happy sleep, and calm was the expression of the fine high brow round which the waving hair clung thickly, though its gold-brown hue was then darkened by the soaking waters ; but the black circle round the eye, the fast-closed lid, and the unheaving breast, spoke of a rest that could not be broken.

The body had been found resting on some of the floating wreck, but though cold and lifeless, the sailors could not bring themselves to leave it to its fate, for their rude but tender natures were touched by the sight of a picture which rested on

the open breast, though half concealed by the hand that so firmly and fondly clasped it. This mute tale of affection spoke to their hearts, and for worlds could they not have rifled the body of what had evidently been loved so much, neither could they bear to let it sink to the forgotten depths of the ocean, where she, whose "unconscious image smiling all serene" was in such strange contrast to all around, could never come to weep over it, or be laid in peace by its side. They placed it therefore in the boat, and when on shore, bore it with the living sufferers to the hut.

The Marquis Villa Hermosa—the same who afterwards kindly assisted Captain Seymour—and his sons were there at that time, and his daughter also, the beautiful Donna Mercedes, who had begged her father to let her accompany him on his charitable mission. This sweet creature was full of all good and kind affections; and as she stood leaning on the arm of her father—his gray locks and venerable look contrasting well with her raven hair and youthful countenance—her heart was filled with pity for the sufferers by whom she was surrounded. Her large dark eyes were drooped in sadness over the inanimate body of the youth before her, when suddenly she espied the half-concealed picture lying on the tranquil heart—the rigid hand still firmly closed upon it; and pointing to it, she raised her eyes to her father's face, as the large tears gushed from them. The old man's lip quivered too as he saw it, when—was it the thawing warmth of the fire, or could it be the weakness of returning life?—the clasping fingers unclosed, the hand relaxed its hold, and gradually the bent arm slid down, and rested supinely on the floor.

The marquis, though he feared it was only the warmth of the fire, yet stooped down and placed his hand upon the young man's heart, and kneeling by his side, raised his head upon his knee. Still no sound—no motion; and he looked up at his daughter with an expressive shrug of despair. She knelt down too, and placed her small hand upon the icy heart. In an instant her breathing became quick with anxiety, and she stooped her ear low down, as if with hearing she would help her touch to say whether what she felt was merely her own pulsation or the faint throb of another's life. Her full eye was fixed upon her father, with the expression of intense expectation, when suddenly the expression changed,—doubt became hope,—hope, certainty! and with a vehement expression of joy, she sprang to her feet, beseeching the people to chafe the cold body, while she went to the fire to warm some wine. Again she knelt by young St. Clair's side—for it was he,—and watched with intense anxiety to see if he could be restored.

He was so at length ; but the quivering, gasping sobs, the writhing of the still helpless body, and the agonized contraction of the brow, showed how terrible was the return to life—the recommencement of circulation through the collapsed arteries and veins,—“molten pain,” as he afterwards expressed it, “running from head to foot.”

Then faint efforts at movement commenced ; and he raised his right hand feebly to his bosom, where it sought restlessly the picture it had held so long, but which on his being raised had swung on the ribbon to which it was suspended to the other side. The marquis perceiving what was wanted, put it into his hand, when a smile stole over his countenance, forming a strange contrast to the expression of pain and uneasiness which had contracted it before.

At length a long full breath was drawn, and the eyes opened, and rested upon the figures of those who were watching over him. They wandered from the dark-eyed girl to her gray-haired father, and back again from him to her, in utter vacancy for a time ; but soon somewhat of intelligence beamed from them, and they assumed a questioning look, and the knit brow showed that the scattered senses were collecting themselves again, and striving to make out what was going on around. Then came a sudden flash of intelligence, joy, and astonishment, and—

“Mary?” he murmured.

“He dreams,” said the marquis ; “and takes you perhaps for her whose picture he has there. Poor boy !”

The young girl stooped down and whispered in foreign English, like her father—

“I am not ‘Mary,’ but we will nurse you for her.”

Little did she think how great an influence that nursing would exercise on her own destiny !

“Who are you?” he asked.

“Mercedes di Villa Hermosa,” she replied. “But you must not speak yet ; you will come to our house, and then you shall get well.” And she rose to make preparations for their departure, for the carriages had arrived.

In moving him they discovered that his left arm was broken, and that he was otherwise much hurt ; but they raised him with the utmost care, and after a short drive they arrived at the château, where every comfort and assistance awaited him and his fellow-sufferers.

On examination it was found that his arm was broken high up near the shoulder, and dreadfully crushed, so that the setting it was a most difficult as well as painful operation, especially as so long a time had elapsed since the accident had occurred. When it had occurred he could not tell ; probably, he thought, while

he lay insensible on the wreck, amid the clashing of the floating timbers.

When he was a little recovered, and Captain Seymour was able to see him, he heard with extreme interest the sad details of the wreck, and also the account which Captain Seymour gave him of his own feelings, and of those which seemed awakened in the wild old Irish seaman. He prayed earnestly that in both of them it might be a vital work; and that the seed sown in that hour of terror might prove to be of the Lord's own planting, which could not be rooted up.

And so, as years rolled on, it truly proved; for storm and sunshine—all changes, and all chances, served but to nourish it in Captain Seymour's calm, straightforward mind; while the wild feelings of the Irish sailor seemed all enlisted in the service of Him whom he had so long blasphemed and defied, yet who had shown him such signal mercy and kindness—his frequent answer to those who reviled him for the change being—

“And sure it's not for me to take it any way but aisy, that ye should rail at me; for wasn't it that same I did mysel' to ould Will Lawrence as is gone—God rest his soul!—and many anither to the fore. But wait a bit, and see how ye'll feel yersel's when ye're shook ower hell as I ha' been, and find it is the blessed Lord alone as can save ye from fallin' into it—praised be His name!”

CHAPTER XXIX.

Oh, gentle friend! to love in doubt and woe,
Shutting the heart the worshipp'd name above,
Is to love deeply.

MRS. HEMANS.

THE Marquis Villa Hermosa and his family did all in their power to console their guests for the past, and make the present agreeable to them.

Captain Seymour was long ill, and Mr. St. Clair's recovery was also very slow, though he was able after the first few days to join the rest of the party in the evening, and enjoy the animated conversation which went on. But all motion hurt him, so that when the others joined the young Spaniards in their out-of-doors amusements, he had to remain at home a prisoner to the sofa.

The old marquis and his daughter, however, were indefatigable in their efforts to amuse him; feeling for him naturally more interest than they did for any of his companions, having been so personally instrumental in his restoration to life. The little circumstance of the picture too, gave him a romantic interest in their eyes, enhanced as it was by his own winning manners, his fine countenance, and his intellectual and cultivated mind.

His companions often laughed at him and said that they too would fain be sick, if it would get for them the nursing and companionship that he had; but he well knew that there was no danger either for him or his young companion in their constant intercourse, so cared not for their jests.

To Captain Seymour alone, of all his late companions, had he ever spoken of his engagement to Mary Sydney, for he liked not the light way in which such things were generally spoken of by the others; and the Marquis Villa Hermosa's family had too much feeling and delicacy to mention the secret of which chance alone had put them in possession.

He found great interest and delight in their society and conversation, especially in that of Donna Mercedes, for to her he could talk freely of his engagement, and of the affections which bound his heart so indissolubly to home. The marquis was generally with them, but business sometimes called him away, and then it was that the conversation of the two young friends was more particularly interesting.

At the beginning of their more intimate friendship, Donna Mercedes had one day, with natural curiosity and woman's interest, said to him—

"Do you remember that when first you saw me, you called me 'Mary?' and I wondered; but my father said it was likely that you took me for her whose picture was hanging round your neck. Was it so?"

"It was," he answered. "She is one, Donna Mercedes, whom I dearly love—my own 'promessa sposa' (promised wife)."

"Ah! is it so? then I am glad! It would have been too sad for you to have loved, and she not to be promised yours."

"Yes! and you looked so like her as you bent over me with that kind pity in your eyes, that my confused and dreamy mind for a moment took you for her. Look, Donna Mercedes, at her picture; for I am proud to show how beautiful she is! And is she not like you?"

"Is it?" she asked, as she took the picture from his hand, while a flush of gratified vanity and pleasure overspread her face; "then am I fairer than I had thought, for this is beautiful indeed! And you too, it is strange, put me so much in mind of one I once knew so well! But I never see him now, and maybe

never shall I see him more." And a shade of sadness crossed her expressive countenance.

"Your countrymen are generally so dark," said Mr. St. Clair; "I wonder I should remind you of one of them. But she is half Italian, so has a right to eyes as dark and beautiful as yours, Donna Mercedes."

"She, half Italian and half English? That is strange! for I am myself half Spanish and half English—at least my mother, she was of Scotland; and it is so that I speak my very little, bad, poor English. But he of whom you remind me, was not of Spain; he was of my mother's country, and it was there I used to see him. But it is a long time now!"

"And yet you are constant to him?" asked Mr. St. Clair, smiling.

"Oh, it is only child's affections," she answered, colouring; "he was so kind to me when I was in Scotland, and quite a little girl."

Mr. St. Clair looked at her averted countenance, and marked the quiver of her lip, and thought that the child's affections were not all that filled her heart for her old companion. She turned, and catching his eyes fixed on her, she coloured still deeper than before; and embarrassed, distressed, and softened by the recollections that had flooded her mind, she burst into tears.

"Dear Donna Mercedes!" he exclaimed, in great distress, "do not weep; why should you shed tears over things of such happy memory?"

"Oh, I am foolish," she replied, as the tears still flowed; "but so much of my heart is laid up in those times! My sweet mother is dead, and I go no more to her country, nor hear her dear language spoken, nor go to the simple church any more."

"But you are happy here I am sure, with your father who loves you so! And so do your brothers."

"Ah! they are all very—too good to me, and make too much of me; but still 'tis not the mother's love. They love me, and they go out to shoot, and hunt, and walk, and ride, and come home to love me again; but she was always love, and did never leave me."

Mr. St. Clair was touched to the heart by this simple outburst of tenderest feeling and regret; and felt glad that she would speak to him of that secret sorrow which her very affection for her father and loving brothers would prevent her letting them even suspect. He spoke soothing and kindly words to her, till gradually her tears ceased to flow; when her heart once opened, she poured forth stores of recollections and feelings that had

long been pent up there in silence. So young, and living so retired, to speak was a relief.

Her father's whole heart was hers, and she was the idol of her brothers, but the wearying void within her she could not speak of to them; nor did she like with them to speak of the yearning she felt for her mother's land, and for the teaching of her mother's church.

Her mother had been a Protestant; and by a too common agreement, the daughter had been brought up in that persuasion, while the sons had been educated in the faith of their father. Kind and tolerant as they all were, she did not yet like to have much conversation with them on such subjects, nor could she gain much knowledge from them; and though not herself enlightened, yet she longed for some definite thought of God on which her heart could lean, and her soul find repose.

She remembered the little kirk, and the manse where the zealous, pious Scotch minister had lived, and where she would delight to go with her little tribute of sunny flowers, or of more substantial benefits from the "big hoose" hard by; and where she loved to hear the good man talk, and to follow the 'gude wife' about amongst her poultry and orchards, and in the sheltered garden where the golden beehives were ranged so orderly in a warm corner backed by giant hollyhocks, and with a carpet of mignonnette before them, which yet they would often neglect to take far flights among the purple heaths, which beneath the setting rays of the autumn sun would glow like an "amethyst world set in a golden heaven."

Of all these she often thought,—and of more than these; for mingled with them all, was the memory of the sunny-hearted boy, who, when she was quite a child, would carry her for hours on his back over the whimpering burns, and through the tangled copses, and up the steep hill-sides; and, older grown, would lead her shaggy pony over heath and moor, or scramble with her over the mountain-torrent's deserted bed, when summer suns had dried its stream, or with his wild halloo startle the deer that lay "couched 'mid heath and mountain fern;" or when the way was too rough for her, even with his strong hand to help, would climb the rocks, or ford the clear rills, satisfied with her childish praise or childish kiss, as meed for his strength and prowess.

Well could she picture him, when verging on manhood he used to roam about with her, in his kilt, and plaid, and bonnet with the eagle's feather; which, though a lowlander, he liked to don whenever he visited his highland relations—of whom her mother was one; and well could she recall the pride with which she used to hear the peasants and tenantry say he was the "canniest lad—an' weel favoured too, o' a' the country round."

But above all did she remember the day when first he appeared, full of pride and exultation, in the uniform of that fine but severe service which his daring spirit had selected, and shone before her admiring eyes with all the glories of the long-coveted dirk by his side! Yes! that eye of heaven's own blue,—that glowing, yet fitful countenance,—that voice, harsh perhaps at times to others, yet to her ever gentle and sweet,—that free, buoyant, bounding heart, could not be forgotten.

Her mother—who had married the Marquis Villa Hermosa, when he was attached to the Spanish embassy in England—had died several years before in Scotland, making her grave with her forefathers in her own highland home. From that time the marquis never could bear to visit the country; and Donna Mercedes had therefore been a stranger for several years to the land where all her sunniest recollections and warmest affections were centred. She lived her life there, however, over and over again in memory; and dwelling perpetually on one image, in the seclusion of her father's château, she had learnt to think too much in her woman's heart of what as a child she had so much loved.

Little meanwhile did he, the youth of eighteen, when he had parted from her for the last time, think of the little cousin, four years his junior, whom he had left behind; or at least when his memory did recall her, it was merely as the winning child whom he had found pleasure, in the superiority of his age and strength, in loving as a pet, and humouring as a plaything. Unequal game! where stirring life, and ever-changing scenes served to distract on the one side, and tranquil life and soft monotony on the other, offered ample time to retrace over and over again, that which thus became rooted in memory too deep for the power of earth to destroy.

Unconsciously did Donna Mercedes let her feelings for her old companion flow forth; but Mr. St. Clair was too gentlemanlike and too delicate, to let her perceive that he had read them. The cherished name, however, she always refused to tell, not aware, in her inexperience, that that concealment revealed a vast deal more than the most open way of speaking would have done.

One day when she was talking of him, and had spoken of having seen his ship twice pass by on the ocean, Mr. St. Clair asked when it was.

"It was—the last time—in the spring of this year," she replied, "and once before, on his way out to the Mediterranean, just three years before."

A sudden conviction flashed over Mr. St. Clair's mind; and starting up in extreme excitement, he seized her hand, as if to

prevent her going before she had satisfied his intense curiosity, exclaiming,—trembling with anxiety :

"Donna Mercedes, you have often refused to tell me his name, but now you must—you shall tell me!"

"I shall not, and I will not!" she exclaimed vehemently, as in instant wrath her eyes flashed fire, and she indignantly threw off his hand; "you do forget yourself Mr. St. Clair, and make me sorry that I have ever talked to you as I have done." And she rose like a queen, and left the room.

Mr. St. Clair in consternation rushed after her, forgetful of all pain and weakness—besought—entreated her to return; but as she still walked haughtily on, he, with more of the vehemence of her own country than of an Englishman, threw himself on his knee before her, imploring her to forgive him. In a moment she was pacified.

"I do forgive you," she replied, her countenance changing to the greatest softness, and putting out her hand to raise him from his suppliant posture; "but you must not again so speak—I can let it be in no one."

"I will not," he said rising, and pressing the hand she held out to him to his brow; "yet if you had known my feelings at that moment, you would not have been angry."

"Perhaps I was too harsh and quick in temper," she replied, with sweet repentance in her look; "for you never could mean to speak as I would not like."

They turned to go back again; when, in doing so, Mr. St. Clair perceived two of his shipmates crossing the other end of the large hall in which they were, and he felt sure that they must have been witnesses of the little scene that had just taken place. He was much annoyed, as he knew they would probably put their own most wrong construction upon it; and he felt that without compromising Donna Mercedes, he could scarcely explain away the impression they might have received.

Donna Mercedes, who was vexed with herself for her hasty wrath, was walking with her eyes bent to the ground, and did not see them; for which Mr. St. Clair was thankful, as it might have caused her much annoyance also.

They returned to the drawing-room—he still in a fever of anxiety, and longing again to enter on the forbidden subject. There was at first an embarrassed silence; but Donna Mercedes soon raised her eyes, with the half shy, half playful look of a child who rather doubts its reception, and said, with a little deprecatory smile,—

"Are you now angry in your turn, Mr. St. Clair, that you so long remain without speaking?"

"I am not angry, Donna Mercedes," he replied; "I have no

right—no cause to be so; but my anxiety remains unaltered to know the name which you refuse to tell me, for if it be he whom I cannot but think it is, he is the noblest, the best, the most generous, the most delightful being that walks this earth!”

She gazed on him during this vehement speech, her cheek blanched with emotion, and a suffocating sensation in her breast. She could not speak. He saw her agitation, though careful not to show that he did so.

“Donna Mercedes,” he continued, breathlessly, “I was wrong—I am wrong to ask you to do anything you do not like; but still—will you, if I guess aright—will you tell me this name?”

He paused a moment for her answer; when, gathering from her changing countenance that his request would not again be refused, and maddened to be satisfied as to his conjecture, he impetuously continued,—

“Is it not—Norman Bruce?”

She started, scarcely able to repress a cry at hearing that name pronounced.

“You know him!” she exclaimed.

“Know him! He is the best friend I have on earth! We were at sea together for three whole years! I should have guessed it long ago had you not said he was a Highlander, and the Bruces you know are Lowlanders.”

“Did I say so?—then I was wrong. No, he was not a Highlander,—for I know all the distinctions there, and all the tartans—everything,” and her glowing cheek showed what pride she felt in being acquainted with everything belonging to her beloved Scotland;—“but when in the Highlands, where was my dear mother’s early home, and where she sleeps her sweet last sleep, then he would put on the Highland dress, because he said it was so much more pleasant. Perhaps he knew, too, that he looked so well in it. Yet he was not vain.”

“I understand now, but I mistook you before, Donna Mercedes; and so when the thought did occur—which it did at times from many things you said—that made me always reject it. But when you mentioned the time of his passing out to the Mediterranean and coming back again, I felt it must be he, for his was the only ship that did so at those times, and he was the only Scotchman in her, besides myself. Why *I* was in that ship, Donna Mercedes, with him, when you saw it go out and come back again last spring!”

Suddenly his heart seemed turned to ice; for with the thought of that homeward voyage, there rushed back the remembrance—forgotten at the first moment—of the feelings which had then so intensely filled Norman Bruce’s heart.

He could not conceal his sudden emotion, it was painted too

strongly on his expressive face. She perceived it, and it sent a sudden fear to her heart, though she knew not of what. She was going to speak, when—to her disappointment, but to his infinite relief—her father came into the room, putting an end for the time, to the conversation. Her painfully inquiring looks were, however, continually—involuntarily fixed upon Mr. St. Clair; and feeling how impossible it was to answer them with false smiles, yet unable to bear the thoughts of distressing her, he soon made some excuse, and left the room.

CHAPTER XXX.

We should be very kind to any attempt at improvement. An idle sneer, or a look of incredulity, has been the death of many a good resolve.
—*Essays written in the Intervals of Business.*

"WHAT should he say to Donna Mercedes?" was Mr. St. Clair's first thought when he had reached his own apartment. He knew she would ask him the cause of his trouble, and how could he tell her? He was walking up and down in this perplexity, when the two shipmates whom he had seen in the hall, knocked and entered his room.

"How are you now, my dear fellow?" asked the elder, Mr. Sangrove,—a solemn buffoon, known in the ship by the *sobriquet* of the "Heavy Artillery," and universally disliked.

"Quite well," said Mr. St. Clair, coldly.

"It's very odd," said the other, "but do you know, Battersby and I got amazingly bogged to-day out shooting, and had to return home a little while ago—much earlier than usual you know; and as we were crossing the hall, we thought we espied Donna Mercedes with some one at her feet." Mr. St. Clair made no observation, but continued walking up and down. "But the strangest thing," he continued, laying his hand confidentially on the other's arm, as he passed,—“the strangest thing —”

"Don't touch me," said Mr. St. Clair, throwing off his hand with a look of ineffable disgust.

"The strangest thing," repeated the other, "was, that had it not been that Battersby and I knew it couldn't be of course, we should really have thought it had been you."

Mr. St. Clair continued striding up and down the room in ominous silence; but Mr. Sangrove, who was never contented till he had ventured as far as he dared in provoking another,

continued: "It was certainly strange, wasn't it, Battersby? but we really fancied, St. Clair, that the kneeling person had his arm in a sling."

Mr. St. Clair, irritated at his excessive folly, stopped short in his walk and turned suddenly round upon him. He started back in terror, and his absurd panic struck Mr. St. Clair with such a sense of the ridiculous that he turned again on his heel and recommenced his walk, not now to repress his indignation, but to prevent a fit of laughter which he had no wish to give way to at that moment.

"You seem very much put out, St. Clair," continued the other; "but I can excuse it, as——"

His words died on his lips, for again Mr. St. Clair stopped opposite him, and looking him calmly in the face, said,—

"Mr. Sangrove, you are taking an unwarrantable liberty in talking this nonsense to me. Both you and Battersby know perfectly that the lady you saw in the hall was Donna Mercedes, and the man you saw kneeling before her was me. You thought this strange,—and so perhaps it was; but it was no scene of love, as you may perhaps have supposed. The cause of what you saw was this. In the course of conversation I spoke roughly—with a *brusquerie* that offended Donna Mercedes; and, with that haughtiness which mingles perhaps a little with her noble nature, she rose and left the room. I was vexed, and rushed after her into the hall, where still she refused to speak to me or to return; when, excessively distressed, I threw myself on my knee before her, when in a moment she was softened. This is the true explanation of the scene which you chanced to witness; and if you are a gentleman, you will believe me as one, and, I should be tempted to say, would let the matter go no further, lest others also might receive a false impression, such as you may naturally have done."

"I believe every word you say, and will certainly never mention anything about it," quickly replied Mr. Battersby, a good-natured and good-feeling youth, though simple and uncultivated.

"It *would* be best, undoubtedly, to be silent on *such* a subject," said Mr. Sangrove, with offensive emphasis—for he felt his courage rise at having, as he fancied, Mr. St. Clair a little in his power; "but I must add—though merely in the way of observation—that the affair seems a little strange. I have no doubt that it is all perfectly right; I only mean to say that it *seems* strange—that's all."

When he had finished this ungentlemanlike speech, unaccompanied as it was too by any promise that might have bound even so base a soul as his to silence, Mr. St. Clair looked at him a few moments with a most subduing calm, then said,—

"Mr. Sangrove, I appealed to *gentlemen*, and am thankful to have found *one*. All that I now have to say to *you* is—that this is *my* room, and that *that* is the door. Battersby," turning to the other, "give me your hand; you are a good fellow, and a thorough gentleman. And now," going to the other end of the room, "help me, will you, in moving this table nearer the sofa. Thank you; that will do, excellently. And if you have time, and would not mind cutting this book open for me which mine host has kindly lent me, I should be really obliged, for I find one hand and my chin but awkward work."

The young lad, who had always been a laughing-stock in the ship, and who had never scarcely before been spoken to by Mr. St. Clair, who was held in great respect and somewhat of awe by the generality of the younger officers, was in a fever of excitement, and would rather have cut the book into ribbons than not have cut it at all. He held his hand out for it, but when Mr. St. Clair turned to give it him, his eye fell on Mr. Sangrove, as he stood just where he had left him, suffocating with passion, not having endured to leave the room in the humiliating way in which that course had been suggested to him, yet not being able to find one word that he dared to utter, even in the extremity of his rage. Mr. St. Clair had known of course that he was not gone, as the door had not been opened; but throwing a look of astonishment into his expanded eyes, as if questioning the evidence of his senses, he made a sudden movement towards him.

The door opened, slammed to—a rushing pattering sound upon the stairs, and all was still!

He turned back, laughing, to Mr. Battersby, who joined in his mirth rather tremulously, feeling indeed very much like one who had just seen his friend wrecked on the breakers from which he himself had barely escaped. He sat down to his book, and commenced cutting with so much good-will that his arm, taking a sweep like a scythe, mowed down several things off the table, which came crashing noisily on the floor.

"Softly, my good fellow!" cried Mr. St. Clair, as his new friend, striving to hide his confusion, spread himself over the floor endeavouring to collect the dispersed articles, some of which, being money, had rolled away in all imaginable directions; "you mustn't slash away at a book as you would at an enemy that was boarding you."

"The book was boarded," exclaimed the boy, in great delight at his own wit, lifting his head just above the table for a moment, then diving down anew in search of the lost articles.

"What! you're a punster, are you?" said Mr. St. Clair, good-humouredly. "Well, try your hand at everything, and

then you will find out what you can do best; only be careful of the good marquis's book when you begin cutting again."

Mr. Battersby, having picked up all the fallen things, and successfully tracked to its retreat each rolling dollar and doubloon, placed them all before Mr. St. Clair, and begged him to count them.

"Count them! not I," replied Mr. St. Clair. "Why, do you suppose your wit begets Dr. Johnson's suspicion in my mind?"

"I did not think you would suspect me, I am sure," said the boy; "and I don't know who Dr. Johnson is, that he should either." And he looked much alarmed.

Mr. St. Clair could hardly help smiling.

"Dr. Johnson," he said gravely, "is no personal friend of yours or of mine, Battersby, but a great dead moralist and philosopher; and he gave it as his decided opinion, that 'the man who made a pun would pick a pocket.'"

"I hope not," exclaimed the frightened youth; "I never took anything in my life, though I may perhaps have made a pun."

"And may you live to make a great many, my boy! Few men can say that a pun is the worst thing they ever said, and I only hope you will not let it be the best. And now set to work again, there's a good fellow; but do not 'sweep the horizon' with your arm this time."

Mr. Battersby sat down again, all tremulous with nervous pleasure at Mr. St. Clair's speaking to him with such condescension, as he considered it, yet in great alarm lest any new misfortune should occur in the course of his operations. He began this time with such dreadful caution, that the knife had no power to cut, but only tore open the pages in vandykes, scollops, and other oblique figures.

"That will never do either," said Mr. St. Clair. "Bring the book here, my good fellow, and I will show you all about it." And putting him into the right way, he left him to pursue it.

Diligently went the knife of the patient youth, whose thoughts never for a moment wandered from his task, so anxious was he to acquit himself satisfactorily; while, seeing Mr. St. Clair's eye continually fixed upon his movements, he fancied he was watching him with an interest equal to his own, so was kept in the most nervous apprehension of failure and disgrace.

Mr. St. Clair's eyes were certainly fixed upon him, but it was unconsciously; for his thoughts were absorbed in other and painful ruminations. His mind had reverted to its cause of discomfort; namely, how he should be able to answer the questions which he was convinced Donna Mercedes would ask him,

without revealing the real state of the case as regarded Mr. Bruce. Yet how could he tell her? He sighed to think that two such beings should love in vain; when, as his thoughts rested first on the one then on the other, suddenly a hope, bright and startling, sprang up within him. Bruce's love for Mary Sydney could not last for ever; and who could there be so fitted to fill that large and then vacant heart, as the being who had so long and deeply loved him? The more he thought of this, the more did the hope grow within him that so it might prove; and his romantic and enthusiastic nature made him feel an intense joy at the hope of witnessing at length the happiness of those he so much loved.

This change in his mood was quickly perceived by Mr. Battersby, who had been long quailing under the cloudy look which had so jealously, as he fancied, been watching his every movement, and was hailed by him as an indubitable proof of the approbation which his assiduous performances were obtaining. He smiled—and his exulting smile was returned by a mechanical one from Mr. St. Clair, who knew no more of what he was doing than the fabled inhabitant of the moon. It did equally well however, for the boy, who cut the few remaining leaves with a hand which could hardly steady itself for pleasure; when, with a little look of pride and exultation, he gave the book over to Mr. St. Clair, who then first again became cognizant of his existence.

"Famously done!" he exclaimed; "I'm really very much obliged to you, Battersby; you've done me a great piece of service. '*Je ne bats que d'une aile,*' you see just now, and that makes me a sad awkward fellow."

Mr. St. Clair was a very good linguist, and was apt—as such too often perhaps are—to disport in other tongues besides his own; forgetful that all could not follow him into those rich pastures. Mr. Battersby was exclusively given to his mother tongue; and could never therefore enter into the gist, or the jest, of what was said on those dark occasions. He had moreover a strong and most discomfiting suspicion that whatever was said in that mysterious way was always against himself. This treacherous dealing, as he imagined it, this abuse of him behind, as it were, his mental back, he took most unkindly; and it was often in vain that those who had unfortunately used the suspicious expressions, endeavoured to clear the mists from his mind by translating word by word what had been said; and had it not been that his temper was unusually placable, and that his memory died every night and rose not again in the morning, he never could have sustained the wear and tear of the ceaseless annoyances which he was thus continually inventing for himself,

besides really that the others did very often play upon his weakness.

On the present occasion the blood sprung like flames into his face, and he was filled with tremors and confusion. Not a word could he say; his whole being was absorbed by the one desire of knowing what the mystic words pronounced by his new oracle could mean, and yet he dared not for his life use the simple expedient of asking.

"Well, my good fellow, what troubles you?" said Mr. St. Clair; as suddenly, from the depth of the abstraction into which he had again fallen, he became aware of the furtive looks of alarm that were cast at him from time to time.

"Oh, nothing!" replied the other, looking hard out of the window, as if attracted by something curious and new taking place on old ocean, who lay tossing and tumbling at a little distance. "How gloomy the sea looks."

"Very."

He got up, and sauntered round the room till he came to a book-shelf.

"How many books you have!" he observed. "I lost all mine in the wreck."

"So did I. Those belong to the marquis, or his daughter."

"Oh!"—taking one down. "But these would be quite useless to me, for I cannot read anything but English. Being in a foreign country I thought I should have learnt a little—something at least;—but somehow I don't."

"Do you try?"

"I try to make out what I hear sometimes, but I cannot understand it a bit, and then when the others are enjoying the fine things that are said, I get no amusement at all."

"You get something though, not very amusing I fear, my poor boy," thought Mr. St. Clair, who recollected now having heard the others speak of his little weakness,—which they often delighted to play upon. He did not wish to do that however, but perceiving his aim now—from better motives—he said:

"But why don't you ask them the meaning of what they say?"

"I do sometimes; but they generally laugh all the more, almost as if it were at me, and tell me—something; but how am I to know that they are not quizzing me by what they say? I don't know a word;—it is all gibberish to me."

"Well, ask somebody you can trust. You would trust me, wouldn't you?"

"Yes," he answered, quickly; but the next instant turned scarlet up to and amongst the roots of his thin light hair, at the recollection that it was doubt of him which was causing all his

uneasiness at that moment; yet could he not have told him so, to have been made master on the instant of all the languages which Mezzophante once taught, or Lassen still lectures on.

It required no mesmeric clairvoyance for Mr. St. Clair to read all that passed in his friend's shallow, transparent mind. Though his back was turned to him, yet he saw the rush of blood which followed his prompt avowal of trust in himself, and knew that it proceeded from the sudden consciousness of having, in fact, mis-trusted him; yet he did not in his mind charge him with duplicity, but giving full credit to the honest truth of what he had said,—with that beauty of disposition which could put itself *en rapport* with everything that needed its sympathy,—he felt for his difficulty as to what he had left unsaid.

"Well, then," he resumed, after a moment's pause, "trust me now; for I dare say you would like to know the meaning of the little sentence I made use of a few minutes ago, wouldn't you? What I said, if I remember right, was, 'Je ne bats que d'une aile,' wasn't it?"

"I believe so."

"Well, that means, 'I fly with but one wing,' or, more literally, 'beat or strike with but one wing;' and that I said made me awkward. It is one of those little figures of speech, light and graceful, with which the French language abounds, and which we learned personages are tempted to use, as far more airy and expressive than our own more heavy words. If I had expressed myself in English, I should have said, probably, 'I have but one arm to use,' more correct perhaps, but—prosaic."

"Yes, certainly," said young Battersby, sunk deeper than ever in confusion at this simple explanation of what had been so terrific to him.

"Come, my good fellow," said Mr. St. Clair after a time; "don't absorb yourself in those books, but come here for a moment, and let us talk to each other face to face, like two sensible young men as we are."

Mr. Battersby put the volume he had been vacantly poring over back again into its place, and settled all the books evenly upon the shelf; during which time he was getting up his courage—calling himself a fool, and making all sorts of wise and discreet resolutions for long years to come. This done he turned, and though still very red, sat down and tried to look steadily into Mr. St. Clair's face. The latter smiled, and said,—

"Now, Battersby, we are quite new friends you know; but I want to begin so that we may in time be old ones and good ones. So now, will you let me say a word to you?"

"I shall be much obliged, I'm sure," eagerly replied the other.

"Well then, I would beg of you not to let your mind torment itself by suspicions on all sides, as I see it does. If people are unfeeling and ungentlemanlike enough to 'quiz,' as you call it, a youth like you, they are not worth your troubling yourself about. You may not be as learned or as clever perhaps as some of them, but if they do that, they are despicable fellows—or at least, wickedly thoughtless; and I had rather have a good and honourable heart like yours than all their cleverness, if they can turn it to no better account. And don't be led to say and do things against your will, as I know you often are,—especially by such a fellow as Sangrove, who is not fit company for any one."

"No, he really is a horrid fellow!" said the boy; "and I am ashamed of having been so much led away by him as I often have. But he always seized hold of me, you know; and at first joining I was pleased, for I knew no one, and he was older than me—older than you too, I think. And then, what with one thing and another, and getting me a little in his power perhaps, you know, he drove me about as he liked; and I was, like a fool—afraid of doing or saying anything but what he chose."

"Yes, that's what I've seen. But how had he got you in his power?"

"Oh! I don't know!" said the boy; "but I would not have any youngster go with him, he's such a bad fellow. He got me to go with him to the town and began to play, and got me to do so too. I wouldn't at first; but he laughed at me, and said I was afraid he supposed; and so, like a fool, I said I would, only I had no money. So he offered to lend me some, which I thought very kind at the time. So I played, and won a little at first; but then I lost and he lent me more, and I lost that, and then he would not lend me any more; and he has never let me have a minute's peace about what I owe him, but is always worrying me about it, and saying he'll tell Captain Seymour—he's such an unfeeling fellow! His chest was washed ashore you know, so he had money; but mine went down, so I had none. I'm sure I'd pay him quick enough if I had it; but I can't now, till I get my pay."

"You can though, and shall," cried Mr. St. Clair, indignant at this account; "and if it were not that I have a private score myself against that unworthy fellow, I would this very day tell Captain Seymour, and let him know who he has on board. But at any rate you shall be freed from him. Now, how much do you owe?—Come—don't be afraid! If you don't tell me, I cannot help you, you know."

"I am afraid you will think me so very wicked."

"—do it again, I shall; but you'll take care I think, that

that shall not be the case ; and mind, I don't *give* you the money even now, I have but little in the world, and have great uses for it, and cannot throw it away in such a bad cause ; but I'll lend it you gladly if I have got enough, and you shall repay me as soon as you get your pay. So that's agreed ; and now tell me how much it is ? ”

“ That will more than pay it there,” said the boy, looking at the little pile of dollars lying on the table before him ; “ and as I was picking them up just now, how I wished they were mine ! ”

A shiver ran through Mr. St. Clair as the almost childish speaker said this, feeling from what a gulf he had perhaps, been snatched. His mind was solemnized by seeing the evident hand of a saving God over this helpless boy ; and much as the incident which had led to their friendship had been a subject of annoyance to him, he blessed God for it, as being the means perhaps of saving him from ruin, both here and hereafter.

“ Battersby,” he said, “ you will let me speak a few words more—seriously to you ? ”

The boy looked up with a feeling that gave almost a beauty to his countenance ; but his heart seemed almost too full for him to speak.

“ I wish you to reflect on the great danger of giving way to even one sin. Look here now ;—you have gambled, and got yourself into difficulties by it, and have put yourself into the power of a bad man who strives to make you as bad as himself. You are afraid of having what you have done known ; and that leads to a want of openness of character, for there is nothing like being able to stand up fearlessly before God and man. Then see to what a temptation it has exposed you. Harassed by a sense of vile dependence on this fellow,—longing to be able to pay your debt, you find yourself with money in your hand which you feel to *long* was yours. I am not accusing you for a moment of even the barest thought of taking it” (for he saw a sudden, vehement disclaimer rushing to young Battersby's lips) ; “ I believe you would no more have done it *then* than I would ; but your own short experience may show you how strong temptation is, and how weak our hearts, and it is impossible to say that Satan might not have tempted you in some hurried, evil moment, to do that which must have plunged you in irretrievable misery. Thousands have done so—young—comparatively innocent like you, ruined for life, by a stumble on its threshold ! ”

The boy covered his face with his hands and burst into tears.

Mr. St. Clair was also much moved, for he had, young as he was, seen fatal instances of what he was speaking of, and could not forget what his own feelings had been, when—though

from a far different cause—he had had reason to fear that his own prospects for life might have been blasted. After a few minutes however, he said—to soothe and relieve his companion—

“Well now, Battersby, do you count out as many dollars as you owe that base fellow, and I will send them to him; and you can take a few more for present use if you like.”

The lad checked his emotion, and did as his friend had told him; and Mr. St. Clair then sealed the money up, directing it to Mr. Sangrove, and putting in the inside, “Amount of Mr. Battersby’s debt to Mr. Sangrove; to be acknowledged to Mr. St. Clair.” He then rang the bell, and requested the servant to take it to Mr. Sangrove and wait for an answer.

The acknowledgment soon arrived, and giving it to Mr. Battersby, Mr. St. Clair said,—

“There now, take that, and ask God, my boy, to enable you to keep the resolution—which I am sure you have formed—of never going near a gambling-table again, or of being led by any one, with your eyes open, into sin of any kind. You, and all of us, are very weak, but God will strengthen us, if we ask Him, whenever temptation comes to us; but remember it is for us to keep out of the way of it, or we have no right to expect His help. If we put ourselves into the fire, we have no reason to expect to be saved from burning; but God will be with us in the fire of the hottest temptation if it assail us without our seeking it, and if we claim His help, according to His faithful promises. Young as you are, you have been led by that miscreant—for he deserves no better name—into many a fiery trial, I’ll answer for it; but now you must thankfully acknowledge God’s rescuing goodness, and avoid him and all his ways for the future. The horrors of the gambling-table you have had experience of, and of bad society you have had doubtless your share. Cast in your lot now with a higher set: the good and godly of the earth—the angels and archangels of heaven! Nay, more—for do you not know your high inheritance, boy?”—and in his earnestness he laid his hand on the youth’s shoulder, as he looked kindly into his quivering countenance,—“‘Heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ!’ Oh! think of these wonderful words! these things—these glorious joys prepared for you by a gracious Saviour, and do not barter them for the follies and corruptions of a world that will scorn you for your pains, and desert you in the hour of your need. Battersby! let it not be in vain that God has saved you from the devouring sea when so many others perished; but pray to Him to save you also from the whelming temptations of this very wicked world, and from final destruction in hell.”

"I will," said the lad, much moved, "for I do see how very bad it is to do what is wrong after God has been so good to me; and I have not been able to help wondering many times why such a fool as I, and such a cowardly brute as Sangrove, were to be saved, when so many fine fellows went to the bottom."

"I am glad you have had so much thought about it, Battersby. Let us hope that we may soon see that God had good in store for you when He saved you; and as for those poor fellows who went down—and whom it makes one's very heart sick to think of—all we can say is: 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'—And now, my good boy, you shall leave me; and thank you much for your help, and for listening so patiently to my long lecture."

"I'm glad to help you in anything," said the youth, quickly; "and as for your lecture, all you have said is quite right, and if I'm none the better for it, that's my fault, not yours; and at any rate it is better to be lectured, as you call it, by you, than to be laughed at for a fool—like a fool as I am—from morning till night, by the others."

"As to laughing at you, that is what I shall never do I hope; and I do not fear as to your trying to do better for the future. You must remember, Battersby, that though you are younger than any of the others—excepting that nice little fellow Somerville—yet you still have it in your power to do great good or great harm. With regard even to Sangrove, if you had stood firm you know, you might not only have kept yourself out of mischief, but have shamed him too perhaps into doing better. Don't be downcast, boy, by my saying this, but only let it stir you up to feeling what a great work God gives to every one of us to do,—to you amongst the rest; and as He tells us it is 'His will' that we should be holy, we may claim His power to make us so. Ask it at the very moment of temptation and you will be sure to get it; and, above all, keep out of temptation, and cultivate tastes and feelings that lead to higher things. Now see, will you, if Captain Seymour is in; and if he is, tell him that I don't feel very well just now—for I am quite knocked up—and I should take it as a special favour if he would not mind the trouble of coming to me here for a few minutes. I know he will excuse my not going to look for him."

Young Battersby turned to go; but then came back, saying, with much pleasantness of manner, though with some confusion, "Thank you very much indeed about the money. A thousand pounds at another time I shouldn't have cared about so much. And thank you too for all you've said. I cer-

tainly never was talked to before like that in all my life ; for at home they always said I was fit for nothing but to be knocked about at sea, so I was sent, though I never could bear it. But I shall remember what you've said, and as God made me and knows I'm not clever, He will not expect much of me in that way ; but still, as He has saved me, I shall try and please Him as you say, as far as I can, and at any rate He and you are two that will never turn me into ridicule." And with a quivering countenance, he held out his hand to Mr. St. Clair, who shook it cordially.

"One word more Battersby—it is our Lord's : 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.' The spirit may be willing, but the flesh is *very* weak."

CHAPTER XXXI.

Too much stress should not be laid on calumny by the calumniated. They should remember that it is not so much their business to explain to others all they do, as to be sure that it will bear explanation, and satisfy themselves.—*Companions of my Solitude.*

MR. BATTERSBY had scarcely left the room; when Captain Seymour entered it, having been on his way there when he met him. He asked Mr. St. Clair why he had wished particularly to see him.

"I wished to see you, sir," he replied, "because I have got myself into somewhat of a foolish scrape."

And he related the case as it had occurred ;—only not mentioning what it was that had given offence to Donna Mercedes. Captain Seymour looked grave ; and Mr. St. Clair himself, on repeating it again, dispassionately, could not but feel how awkward the affair looked in its half-explained state, and his colour rose as he perceived Captain Seymour's eye fixed inquiringly on him.

"As to doubting your word, Mr. St. Clair," he said, "that would never enter my head ; but even on your own showing, the thing has rather a strange appearance. I had heard something of it, and it was to inquire further that I was on my way here when I met Mr. Battersby ; for you will remember, Mr. St. Clair, that you once put me in possession of a secret, which, if I thought you capable of making love to Donna Mercedes, I should feel it my imperative duty instantly to make known to her."

"If you did, Captain Seymour," said Mr. St. Clair, with proud displeasure, "let me say that you could tell her nothing but what I have myself told her already. She is fully aware of my engagement to Miss Sydney."

"Indeed!" said Captain Seymour, his countenance clearing in a moment; "you young fellows make quick confidences and friendships."

"Where there is sympathy of mind and feeling, confidences and friendships do spring up very quickly. Donna Mercedes and I perfectly understand each other."

"Take care my good friend, that you don't get to understand each other too well. People begin sometimes by talking of the 'absent,' till they forget any but the 'present.'"

"It may be so, sir, with some, but it is not with me—I could never have a thought disloyal to Miss Sydney; neither would Donna Mercedes have felt inclined to encourage me, if I had been base enough, under my circumstances, to have sought her affections."

"I am glad to hear it; however, till you told me, I was not of course aware that this intimate confidence did subsist between you and your fair friend, and I therefore could only fear that you might have had a facile heart, soon won, and soon lost—for I never could for an instant have thought you capable of making love merely to pass away an idle hour, or to gratify a despicable vanity. It is a practice, I am well aware, but too common in our profession—and in the army too for that matter—and where not?—but not the less disgraceful."

"Thank you, sir, for your good opinion so far; but you must have thought me deplorably weak—after having so recently informed you of my positive engagement to another—to fancy that I could be so soon drawn away even by the loveliness of Donna Mercedes."

"I classed you only with the generality of young men when thrown into such situations—though it was after all a mere passing doubt produced by what I had heard and the rather strange appearance of affairs. Your word however is quite sufficient, even against all other evidence. I have too high an opinion of your principles, Mr. St. Clair, to believe you capable of deliberate evil."

"I am grateful, sir, for what you say; and now as you are satisfied, I care for no one else. But as you did know my secret, I was anxious to put you in possession of the facts as far as I could,—wishing also that you should kindly put a stop to anything further being said while we were here—for Donna Mercedes' sake more than for mine. Once away from her family, I care not what that fellow Sangrove can say."

"Is there not one in England whom you might wish this report not to reach?" asked Captain Seymour.

"Miss Sydney? A thousand such might reach her! What is that to a heart like hers?"

"Do not try her heart too much," said his friend kindly; "there is no saying what feelings may assail it in absence and despondency."

Mr. St. Clair sighed as he thought of her—absent and perhaps despondent! but no fear of her ever misdoubting him crossed his mind for a moment.

"But now," continued Captain Seymour, "I must tell you that Mr. Sangrove has thought fit to say, that when he and Battersby saw what took place in the hall, you, having also seen them, got into such alarm that you sent for them, and tried to get from them a promise of secrecy. He was 'not to be got over in that way,' he said, and would not make any promise so left the room; when you got hold of Battersby, and succeeded in 'buying him off,'—actually 'bribing him with money,' he said, to keep your counsel, and he supposed, to contradict the report if it got about."

"The infamous scoundrel!" cried Mr. St. Clair, furious at these calumnies, and astounded at seeing how easily even the best actions might be wrested to the ruin of a character. "Ask Battersby the account of the whole affair, Captain Seymour, he will tell you all. I had not intended to have exposed Mr. Sangrove as the disgraceful fellow I know him to be, because, as I told Battersby, I had a grudge against him myself because of his conduct about this affair—but now it is fit he should be seen in his true colours. Ask Battersby, sir; he will tell the truth, I'll answer for it! I send for them here!" he repeated, with a fresh burst of indignation. "Why! he intruded himself on me till I told him, in so many words, that *this* was my room, and that *that* was the door! But again I beg, sir, send for Battersby instantly, and ask him the truth before them all. He is a weak boy, but he is honourable and a gentleman—which I fully gave the other to understand I did not consider him!"

"You have roused a hornet I fear," said Captain Seymour; "it is best to let such alone, St. Clair."

"Sir! who can stand a despicable scoundrel like that? Better he should be known thoroughly, and 'chasséd' from the society of gentlemen at once. But again let me beg you to lose no time in settling this affair. You may well think that for such accusations to rest against one's name even for an instant, is enough to set one's brain on fire."

"I'll go, St. Clair; make yourself easy, and forgive me that

for a moment I was staggered by what was said. And forgive me too that I am still rather curious,"—with a half-smiling shake of the head,—“about this wonderful ‘quarrel’ with Donna Mercedes.”

“My dear sir,” exclaimed Mr. St. Clair, eagerly, “if during any period of my life I can do so—as I have a *romanesque* hope of being able some day,—I will write and tell you all—everything, even if you were at the furthest end of the world!”

“Well! I’m glad to hear you say that. That sets my mind quite at rest about it, even now.”

“Thank you, sir; that word is worth thousands! Could you really have doubted my truth, what a wretch must you have thought me!”

Captain Seymour left the room, and being guided by a confused noise of voices in one of the apartments, he entered it. A lamp partially lighted up the further end, and near it stood a group of young men. As Captain Seymour walked towards them he distinguished Mr. Sangrove’s voice, saying,—

“Didn’t I tell you yesterday about that debt you owed me, and didn’t you say you could not let me have it till you had got your pay?”

“Yes, I did.”

“And didn’t you notwithstanding that, pay it me to-day, not half an hour ago?”

“Yes,” said young Battersby,—his spirit thoroughly roused, “I did pay you to-day—about half an hour ago; and I’m heartily glad I did.”

“And may I be allowed to ask then, whether you have received your pay?”

“You know I have not.”

“Might I know whence the money came?”

“From St. Clair.”

There was an exchange of looks of various meanings among the little group, and Mr. Sangrove looking triumphantly round to the others, said,—

“I hope you are satisfied.”

“We must hear a little more first,” said Captain Seymour from behind.

Mr. Sangrove started, and retreated a few paces in alarm.

“I waited,” continued the Captain, “till your questions were finished, Mr. Sangrove, and now I wish to put a few of my own. Will you be so good, Mr. Battersby, as to tell me exactly how everything occurred, as Mr. Sangrove has already I find given his account.”

The lad, with heightened colour, began his narrative, and gave it with perfect correctness and considerable detail—de-

scribing Mr. Sangrove's flight down stairs with such a degree of unwonted humour, that an irresistible laugh was raised at the fugitive's expense.

"It is false!" he cried, pale with rage. "The whole thing is false, almost from beginning to end."

"I incline to think that it is *not* false," said Captain Seymour, looking sternly at Mr. Sangrove. "But about this money affair I have yet to be informed, Mr. Battersby."

The boy then told the whole affair of the gambling, with great honesty though with much confusion,—and how it had made him afraid of Mr. Sangrove, and that Mr. St. Clair had lent him the money that he might be freed from any obligation to him, &c. &c.

"You knew very well who the money came from, Sangrove," he added, addressing the latter, "though you chose to ask me just now as if you did not,—for you were told to acknowledge the receipt of the debt to St. Clair, and you did so,—and here, sir, it is." And he held it out to Captain Seymour.

"This is a very painful affair, gentlemen," said the latter, after looking at the paper, and returning it to Mr. Battersby,— "though not as regards Mr. St. Clair, I am thankful to say. Everything has redounded most highly to his praise—exceedingly so indeed! But for some others it is, as I have said, a very painful business. For myself I can only say that I greatly regret having been for one moment staggered in my good opinion of Mr. St. Clair by the false representations of others, and I hope for the future to have more confidence in my friends. For Mr. Battersby, my wish is that he may never again be led into evil ways by any one; and for Mr. Sangrove—that he may leave *his* evil ways as soon as possible."

CHAPTER XXXII.

The beautiful time ! when every foundation stood fast, and all that was, was true and constant, and of kin to the pure heavens.—ADAM GRAEME.

THE next day there was great bustle and excitement in the château of the Marquis Villa Hermosa, for news was brought from the port of Vigo, that a vessel had come in from the south, bound to England.

The marquis instantly sent down to make all necessary arrangements ; while his guests busied themselves in what preparations were requisite before leaving the roof that had so hospitably sheltered them in their distress.

Captain Seymour felt greatly agitated now the time was really approaching for sending in his account. He did not yet know whether the officer who had been despatched had reached England ; for such was the unsettled state of the country at that time, and so wretched were the postal arrangements of those parts, that travelling was very unsafe, and there could be no certainty of any letter sent from far, ever reaching its destination.

Friends might therefore, in England, still be in ignorance of the fate of those snatched so suddenly and fearfully away, and be thinking of them as in full life, while they were lying low in their graveless sleep,—without a prayer said over them, or a passing bell to sound for their departure.

Yet better so—even for the careless sinner—than to be left lingering on the godless couch of pain, accumulating each hour fresh guilt upon the soul, and suffering the inexorable hand of death to deal its blow, while still fatuously reckoning on long days to come, of folly—madness—crime !

“ Beware the slow-sudden death ! ”

And to those whose hopes had been hidden deep where no human hand could disturb them—what had there been ? A moment's pang ! and Heaven !

Mourn not their fate ! Their rest is peaceful, and their spirits rejoice in those regions of calm ecstatic bliss, where “ there is no more sea.”

Neither let the praying heart “ sorrow as them who have no hope ” over those they loved who were snatched away before they had given open signs of a regenerate heart. Quicker than

thought the Spirit of God can descend, and reveal salvation to the soul. "The light of another's prayer" might have been thrown silently on their benighted hearts; and as the waters closed above their heads, the gates of Heaven might have been unfolded to them, and angels' voices have cried, "Behold your Saviour God!" Doubtless many such answers to prayer have been; and, Christian mourners! take the comfort of that thought home to your hearts. "Walk by faith, and not by sight!"

The troubling emotions of the previous day had had a very injurious effect upon Mr. St. Clair, and had produced feverish symptoms which the surgeon looked on with considerable disquiet. His fractured arm had never yet ceased to trouble him; and now a tendency to inflammation which had previously given much trouble to subdue, showed itself so decidedly as to excite serious alarm, for the fracture was so near the shoulder that any inflammation might quickly spread to a vital part.

"I am grieved to the heart to leave you, St. Clair," said Captain Seymour, going to him as soon as the arrangements were made for his own departure, and sitting down by his bed, the surgeon having insisted on his remaining there.

"Leave me, Captain Seymour!—you don't suppose I shall remain behind?"

"Hasn't the surgeon told you that it is as much as your life is worth to attempt to go?"

"No; and I cannot stay, sir—it is impossible."

"My dear fellow, you can, and must. Remember, I am still your commander and you must not mutiny;" and he smiled kindly, though his heart was heavy for him. "You will have something perhaps, for me to take to England," he added, after a few minutes of sorrowful silence.

"A few lines, sir, I will trouble you with, if I am able to write them. If not, if you would have the kindness to write a note and put it in the post as soon as you reach England, I should feel very grateful: to Mr. Bruce—Norman Bruce, Mount Street."

"That young shipmate of yours, that I have heard you speak of?"

"Yes."

"And to no one else?"

"I have a letter for Miss Sydney; but he will send it her, if I'll inclose it with his note."

"Is he Miss Sydney's confidential friend, as Donna Mercedes is yours? If so, and either of you marry the right person at last, it will be a marvel I think. You have good reason I hope, to place as much reliance on him as you do on yourself, for really you seem to me to be playing at hazard on all sides."

"I have good reason to confide in him, Captain Seymour; he is the very soul of honour."

"You are young, St. Clair; you have loved early and successfully—that is not a school for much experience, and yet I hope you may never have to learn in a bitterer one. In your case I trust all will go well; but yours is not a course that could be often pursued with impunity."

"Perhaps not, sir; yet it is not the confiding, surely, that is wrong, it is the not taking sufficient care in whom we confide. To trust no one!—as well live in a howling wilderness!

" 'Better trust all and be deceived,
And mourn that trust and that deceiving;
Than doubt one heart, that, if believed,
Had bless'd one's life with such believing.' "

"Well! you're quite right; and happy the heart that feels as yours does!—that, judging from itself, can believe in the truth and worth of others."

"You are too good to me, sir," said Mr. St. Clair, touched by his kind expressions; "but I should hardly dare trust even as I do, if it were not that I pray to be shown my way in all things. Of the Almighty God, we may at least say, confidently, 'I know in whom I have trusted;' and He promises to direct those who pray to Him, in the paths of wisdom, as well as of simplicity."

"Yes, walking by that light, and guided by that hand, you'll not go far astray—I believe you there, St. Clair. But you must not talk any more now—only, are you sure there is nothing more that I can do for you in England?"

"Nothing, thank you. Yes, one little thing, if you go to London and would not mind. I promised that brave old seaman who was washed out of the cabin—poor Lawrence!—that if I survived, I would look to an orphan grandson of his. You would much oblige me if you would take down his direction,"—and he gave it to Captain Seymour,—“and inclose it to Bruce, and ask him to see after the boy for me; and if you would not mind the trouble, and would take that money on the table there and give it him for the lad, I should be much obliged."

"I'll do so, gladly. I suppose it is what remains after your

'bribing off' young Battersby! You'll never get very rich, if you keep such a goodly set of pensioners."

"I did not give Battersby the money, sir—I only lent it him; I thought it better he should pay his own debts—particularly such debts—it might make him more careful for the future. The other is but a trifle,—'seed-corn,' as that good man Scott used to call it."

"And the harvest?"

"Such as we are sure of, whenever from love to God we love and serve his people—the 'blessing which maketh rich,' and to which 'no sorrow' is added."

"Well! you are a happy fellow, for all your broken arm and disappointment now."

"Yes; but——"

"Ah! I can enter into that 'but!' But you must not talk more now. I'll see you again before I start. God bless you, my dear fellow!—keep up your spirits."

When the door closed, and he was again alone, Mr. St. Clair felt desolate and weary-hearted.

"This hour that I have looked to so much!" he exclaimed; "it is come, but not for me. Well! I must rest on God's love, and wait His good—His ever best time for the accomplishment of my wishes."

So, "rolling his care upon God," his mind became tranquil; and he felt grateful that he could at least communicate with Mary, and perhaps soon hear from her.

It was but a few pencilled lines that he could trace at that moment to her, but he had written volumes before.

As he was writing, Captain Seymour came in again hurriedly, saying that, the wind being favourable, the captain wished to set sail again without delay, so that they must instantly go down to the port.

Mr. St. Clair gave him the letter, with one to his mother, also previously written; and Captain Seymour promised to inclose them both to Mr. Bruce, with a note from himself.

"Don't make too much of my illness, my dear sir," said Mr. St. Clair. "A few days' rest will, I trust, set me at least where I was before, and 'by the very first vessel I shall hope to follow you."

It was a lovely evening, at that mellowed season of the year when autumn is falling off to winter. The sky was clear, all but a few amber-coloured clouds from between which the sun sent

forth floods of golden light on sea, and sky, and earth. The gardens of the château lay beneath Mr. St. Clair's window, bright with their many-coloured leaves; and through his open casement the lingering fragrance of jessamines and other exquisite flowers came into the room, filling it with delightful perfume.

He inhaled the air with delight, for it was so "exquisitely mild, that even the very breath became an act of will, and sense, and pleasure." It cooled his fevered frame, and seemed to soothe even his tried and agitated spirit. With unconscious pleasure he listened to the lulling surge of the restless waters, as they gently swelled in long waves, diminishing in the distance into rippling lines of light till they joined at length the hazy horizon; and he watched to see the vessel work her way out of the bay. At length, emerging as it were, from the very bosom of the trees, forth it came, every sail set to catch the light breeze that swelled the canvass. The setting sun had nearly touched the ocean's rim—which rose as a hill of light to meet it—as she wore to clear the bay, her arching sails reflecting back the crimson glow; till gradually the cold shadow of the earth stole up her side, creeping stealthily from yard to yard, from sail to sail. The last ray seemed to linger a moment on the top-gallant-sail as if loath to depart; then flashing on the red pennant that floated on the breeze, making it for a moment a wavy line of fire, it was gone, and the gray vessel glided on the waters, the pallid ghost of the glorious thing it had so lately been.

Mr. St. Clair watched her lessening on the sight as she stood out to sea, till the darkness had quite enshrouded her, when a pang of desolation struck again through his heart. But the good old marquis soon came, and stayed with him till his spirits were somewhat cheered, talking to him, with kindly wile, of anything *but* the departure of his friends. Then came the night—the solemn night!

The tranquil night, with all its blessedness;
Its calm reposeing sleep,—its waking thankfulness.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

He thought there was a closer affinity between high breeding and elevated sentiment than most men imagine.—BISHOP SANDFORD.

WHEN he awoke the next morning, Mr. St. Clair felt much refreshed. He looked out again from his casement. It was early, and the cold, green-tinted sky was perfectly cloudless, while the spectral crescent of the waning moon still struggled to maintain her dying empire against the fast-coming light of her powerful rival. Soon she was but as a vaporous cloud, and a rosy tint flushed the western sky and ocean, mingled as they were in one by the soft mist which hovered over the horizon. He watched the many changeful colourings with quiet excitement soothing to his spirits; and he felt calm, and willing that God should rule in all things.

For some days he had to remain in his own room, and his spirits would perhaps have flagged, had it not been for the unceasing kindness and attention of his hosts. One of the young Spaniards would come and paint in his room; another beguile the time with his guitar—singing an endless number of the now light, now pensive, airs of his native land. Sometimes all of them would sing together *en chœur*,—that most thrilling and subduing of all styles of music, especially from men's voices!—the old marquis sometimes aiding, with his deep sonorous tones, in giving full power and weight to the bass; while, when it was warm enough for the casement to be opened, Donna Mercedes would sometimes lean out from the window of the drawing-room beneath, and join her clear, silvery notes to the voices of the others, the sounds, coming from another direction and aided by the effect of distance, making it seem as if some angel, “pausing from its work of love,” were stooping for a moment to join the harmonies of earth.

These were moments of intense enjoyment to Mr. St. Clair, whose love of music was as a passion, yet who never dared let his own voice join in the concert. He had been brought up—as most Englishmen were in those days—and most unfortunately still are—without any of those accomplishments which not only fill the lighter moments with pleasant and refining occupation, but which add so infinitely to the gratification of others. Having

hitherto lived only with Englishmen, he had not felt the want of them, and had remained in contented idleness when, the time of exercise being past, the claims of society prevented his burying himself in a book. But now that he saw the young men about him so full of resource and occupation at home, though active and full of life in all their pursuits when abroad, he sighed at his own deficiencies, and lamented that his countrymen, though foremost in the fight, brave, courageous, and enduring, should yet, within the hallowed precincts of their homes, bring in general so little either to edify or to delight.

He was expressing his regrets on this subject one day to the marquis, when the latter said,—

"You are greatly covetous, my friend, for your country; but ours has many faults too—more than you see. Your nation is made for great works, and she does them. Providence gives her to sail about, to spread her arms and her empire all over the world; and though we other nations do not always think she does right, yet we all see that when she has done her wrong thing, and got possession of what she wants, she often makes it better than she found it. The countries trust her if they do not love her, and that is great praise."

"You seem to like our nation, sir."

"I have been much in England, and should like it—and among your people too—for you know my own sweet wife, she was of your country, Mr. St. Clair—of Scotland—and I have watched both countries very much. Yours is more like the minds of the Continent, more for philosophy, and thought, and analysis than England is. The Englishman knows much, very much, of the 'things which be,' which we can see and hear, but they do not go enough into the chambers of the heart, and thoughts, and feelings. They like to *know*, and such things can scarce be known, but more felt and thought about. They stretch not out enough into those regions where bright thoughts do rise, those boundless fields which it is fine to traverse, and charming to pluck the flowers we had not found before. When I talk with a clever Englishman, I always add something to my poor little stock of knowledge; but when with others, especially the German, then it is a charm of thought that sets me in a new world, always some new idea that leads on to others, and to others. 'Tis like coming to your rose-tree and always finding some fresh bud."

"I wish it were so in all societies."

"Well, as I said before, you are greatly covetous, and you are right to be so, for your country; and I think your people too much neglect those things which give pleasure in society, chiefly pleasure of family. They are beautiful gifts, and I think where

they can be got, ever so little, they should be got. But granite, though it will not polish so well as marble, yet will it wear longer and endure more hard work; and for some purpose the good Providence seems to have set the Englishman to be the 'hammer of the nations.' Now if the charm of accomplishment and internal society was so strong, your young men would never bear to be away as they are; and so it is without doubt best that home should not have such terrible charm for their active enterprising spirits as would break the heart to leave."

"But yet, dear sir, the English are reckoned a more home-staying and home-loving people than any in the world."

"I would, from the great deal I have seen of them, call them rather *house-staying*, *house-loving* people. I will not say that there is not great real love in their nature, and some do show it beautifully; but in general they keep it very much to themselves, so that it does not much profit others; and there is, among the men especially, too little of thought for the pleasure of those they love. The father will work, if need be, for his children and his wife very hard, and will yet perhaps come to his home and speak so rough and cross, that all the poor children and the wife are frightened, and not happy; and then the young son, as soon as he can get away, he is glad to do so, while the girls they must stay, unless they marry, and the poor woman must till she die. And yet the poor man, it may be, will do his hard work for love of them, but has not that internal fine feeling which will make him see that the kind word and the sympathy which enters into their little concerns, and the thought for their little pleasures, will make a joyful and sunny home, more than all the great riches he can bring."

"Nothing more true!" sighed Mr. St. Clair; as his mind reverted painfully to the corroboration which General Sydney's tormenting irritability and yet devoted love to his daughter brought to what the marquis was saying.

"Then in cases," pursued the latter, "where men of great rank and property do not need what you call 'professions' to gain their money, it is not much better. There is too often too great indifference, and the never studying to think what conversations and amusements may be pleasant to their wife and children; but if in the country they will talk to some man-friend, either about their never-to-end politics, or about their fat cattle, which make one sick to think of, or their good day's shooting or hunting, or else go fast asleep; and then there must be only whisper, whisper, all the evening for fear the poor man's dreams should be disturbed; and so it is dull, and the young sons, besides that they learn to do the same, go off to visit other places, and the girls,

as I said before, do stay and whisper till, if they can, they marry, and the poor wife till she die."

"You draw a doleful picture of our country life, my dear sir."

"Very! but true in too many cases, though not of course in all. But I fear I shall not please you better if I travel with you in the season to your great rich capital, full of smoke! There your men who have no professions—for I will not attack your ladies—are for the most part at their clubs, away from their families, or dangling about in fashionable idling-places all the day; and in the evening they shut up themselves, at the time of day when the air gets cool and charming for the ride or drive, in rooms so hot you die almost, to eat a fortune of heavy meats and dear wines. Then you go forth at midnight to rooms too small and company too great, so that you are squeezed to death, or else must pant out on the staircase for your life; and all with so grave faces—some talking, some not talking—some standing, very tired—some running, or rather walking with sober melancholy over each other in dances; the old women—victims, though by their own choice for the most part—sitting nodding to death on their chairs, till the sun is ready to get up, when, like the beasts of the forest, they all go away and lie down to their rest! And this, night after night, night after night! Or else if there is, some days, no one for you so dissipatedly 'at home,' again you go, shut up yourselves in your own houses, while the father dreams again, and the mother and the children whisper again—if, indeed, they do not all dream together from over much fatigue of other nights. Such are your 'tristes plaisirs,' as they have not ill been called."

"I have not seen much of this kind of life in England," said Mr. St. Clair; "I have always been at sea or in happiest society. But I know it is the case, and have often wondered, having heard people so constantly complain of it, that nothing better has yet been devised. How are these things managed here, sir, or in other parts of the Continent?"

"We are more social a great deal than you in England, but we do not like to go, like one great flock of sheep, all crowding to the same place; neither do we like to fly and flutter about all the night like the bats and the owls. Our houses in the towns are generally open of an evening for our friends to come if they are so minded, and then there is no form and scarcely any expense; we have the pleasant intercourse of cheerfulness, and sometimes our little '*jeux de société*,' if wanted to quicken the wits and spirits; while in another part you can talk as grave and quiet as you like. Then our dinner hour is earlier, and so, soon in the evening, all are away."

"Well, I don't see why we should not do the same; for, after

all, it is pleasant and cheerful sometimes to meet and see one another."

"It would not do—it would not do; conversation is not the talent of your country. I do not say it might not be very greatly, if it was cultivated, because I have known some who, being without your *mauvaise*, '*mauvaise honte*,' have been charming in society. But your men are full of shyness, and think they are surrounded by enemies I believe, instead of friends, and at first they dare not speak, till at last it seems really that they cannot; and what they have of intellect and sense, which is often perhaps a great deal, lies all packed together close in their heads so that one cannot get at it. I remember hearing one of your countrywomen say that 'society was a hill of difficulty to English people, which they had to climb with hands and feet;' meaning, pleasantly, that they could not get on without the cards for their hands or the dancing for their feet. I remember the very clever Lady D——, who knew all the talents in London, saying that she had tried the asking a few pleasant people in the 'season,' (most unseasonable 'season' I always thought for being shut up in a hot, smoky, dusty town, the country all round being one paradise of sweets!) to a plain dinner, but that they would never come the second time; they cared nothing for 'the feast of reason, and the flow of soul,' unless there was also the turbot and the champagne! What can you do?"

"It seems indeed a hopeless case. Yet being here in your family does make me wish very much that society with us, and our homes too—which should be the quintessence of perfect society, were more like it. Yet your sons are forced to leave you too."

"Yes, the one is in the army, and the other in the government; but the eldest, who was in the diplomacy with me, does always now live with me. But the others never willingly go away, and when they get their leaves, they come straight here again, like the lambs to their mothers. Ah! when their own dear mother was alive, it was worst of all for them to go, she made the home so sweet to them."

"I can well believe it! I remember a young Spaniard saying to me once—'*Chez nous, ce n'est pas l'amour qu'on a pour sa mère; c'est de l'idolâtrie!*' (With us, it is not love that one has for one's mother; it is idolatry!) and since I have seen your home and your sons, I can perfectly understand the existence of such feelings." And he sighed at thinking how different his own had once been.

"There was yet one thing," continued the marquis, "that struck me more than all when I was so much in London, and

that was, that in many families—not certainly in all, but in many—the sons were not regarded, as it should seem, as a real part of the family; and though the house might be large enough for all, yet the sons did not live there, but had a lodging of their own, living quite apart, except when they chose to *visit* at their parents' house. I shall never forget the surprise that struck me when first I found that to exist. I could not believe any of my senses! What! for the child to go and live by himself, and the father's house close by! Ah! I could not wonder when I saw how little of love there was, though indeed it was that want of love which made it so at first. And it throws the young son into so many great temptations, with no home in which to feel at home, no union of heart with the parents who could so like to have him away from them. How could he come to them with his thoughts, and feelings, and wishes, and live in that sweet interchange of affection and confidence which is so beautiful and so improving? No! as I said, there may be, and doubtless often is, real regard and affection between the members of a family, but there is very little in general—with the father particularly—of that soul-felt union, that living charm of heart and heart together, which is next to God's heaven! Oh! I have no joy so great as to have my dear sons around me! And even if they should marry, they shall live with me in my château here with their wives and young children to put the new life into me. No need of fresh homes when they have mine, if their duties do not take them away from me. I love to hear their cheerful voices on the air, and to see them at my table and in my gardens, and to know that they have so great a love for the old father." And a tear of tenderness trembled in the old man's eye as he spoke. "You think me foolish and weak maybe, Mr. St. Clair; but one of your own poets, you know, has called domestic happiness the

" 'All of Heaven that did survive the fall;'

and truly it is a beautiful fragrance of the garden of Eden left still in this so fallen world!—Yes! I love to live in quiet with my children, in my own home—if, indeed, quiet and home will stay by me in these troublous times for my country."

"I cannot bear to think of disaster for you, dear sir; but if it were to come, you would seek refuge in England, would you not?"

"Yes! that generous country has always opened wide her arms for the unfortunate. She can afford to do so. Strong in her good laws, she need have no fears from others seeking shelter in her state. But we, with our despotisms, and our bad governments,—a breath might shake us down! Your only

danger—and the greatest, indeed—will be, if you depart from your God, and so make Him depart from you.”

“I trust that will never be! Why should you fear it, sir?”

“I think I see a working of unfaithfulness, and a sitting loose by your God in many of your acts; and I would wish you to value the good things you have, and be thankful for them. Though I have said something of what I cannot like in your great country—in your home polity, so to speak—that you do not always give those sympathizing personal attentions which bind the heart and gladden the path of life,—yet when your generosity and munificence is called for, you are ever ready; and though still nominally of the Romish Church myself, I cannot but admire you—your land specially, Mr. St. Clair—for the great reverence you have for God’s holy Sabbath. I can never forget how much I was struck with that, when, with my dear wife, I first went to Scotland; and now, my child, she keeps her mother’s ways in that, and I myself like them best, and our quiet Sabbaths are healing to my heart. Then I admire the principles of truth which you hold in public reverence above all other lands, excepting indeed this—for all men know that a Spaniard’s word is first, and then his life! And so it is with other moralities; for though there is in the heart of the generality of your men but little, very little, of high noble purity of feeling or principle, yet are those things not openly set aside as too much often with us and with some other countries, in our customs. So, as a nation, you stand before all others. Look what confusion is abroad,—while you stand so firm! It may be, as my dear wife used to tell me, your religion; and if so, you should hold it faster than you seem inclined to do by your public acts and private feelings. But, whatever it is, it seems to have the blessing of God upon it.”

“I trust it has, sir, and wish we may get more worthy of it every day. But, if you will not think it a liberty, may I ask if—as I rather gather from what you say—you, as a Roman Catholic, can possibly disapprove of our late act of emancipation to those of that communion?”

“I do—greatly; it is an offence in my opinion, against both principle and policy. I would do nothing to oppress, nothing to coerce the opinions of any man in religion, and think you quite right so far as that you took off from them all particular restraints as private men. All should have freedom of action and worship, be it the Jew, the Mohammedan, the Hindoo, or the poor savage who has for his fetish a dried grasshopper in a calabash! But for a nation to admit into its government those whom it has publicly and solemnly declared to hold doctrines in opposition to the word of God on many vital points, that I do call a

great infidelity,—a great setting at nought of that word of God."

"It has always seemed so, I confess, to me; though I should hardly have expected you would have thought so."

"It is no question here, Mr. St. Clair, of which religion is in the right, the rule I have mentioned applies to all who have the word of God; if others sin against that in their principles, according to your thoughts, set them not up as rulers of your people, or you show that you give but light heed and little glory to that word."

"A great feeling you know, sir, in our country is, that all who pay taxes should have a voice as to the levying of them."

"Ah! there you are! with your English cry of 'money!' getting better of all things!—the 'Golden Calf,' which did cause all the 'Commandments' of God to be broken! Forgive me my good friend, but it is too much so with your nation. Those of other creeds might well be content with the great blessings of liberty and security in your country, and not care for putting in their word for the taxing of it. And let not one whose spiritual faith is opposed to what you feel is the truth, have a voice as to your church, your education, and such things—I cannot think it right. Then I said also, it was against good policy,—but this applies only to a Protestant country. Is it wise, do you think, to put any of the power of government into the hands of those who own a much stronger allegiance to a foreign power than they do to their own native prince? What would be the case if the Pope of Rome were to send injunctions to all Roman Catholic voters to choose only such and such men, or to the members in the Houses to vote in such and such a measure according to his will? Dare they disobey? I am a Catholic, and I know. I do not say that with me the injunction would have the weight it would with others, because my views—to make a little confidence to you—are too much Protestantized for me to think the Pope has the power of pardon or of condemnation; but with a real, true Catholic, such as I once was, it must have all weight; for what, at the solemn hour of our departure, could the greatest of earthly things bring of consolation to the true son of our Church who saw himself dying without the absolving pardon of that Church? Those things have more reality with him than you Protestants seem to think. It may be true, or it may be false, what he believes, but trust me, young sir, the Catholic is not in general so utterly indifferent to his religion as the most part of you Protestants are to yours. He cares for his Church, if he does not for his God; and if it is not always a motive of holiness or source of peace to him, it at least holds him by the strong cords of fear, and the power of his priest is great over

him. Therefore, again I say, it is not only unfaithfulness to God to give power to those whom you think oppose His will, but a fearful impolicy to give it to those who have a greater master out of the kingdom than they have in it. Ah! you have 'sown the wind,' and may have to 'reap the whirlwind.'"

"God forbid!"

"Amen! for I do love your country, though I have been so bold as to speak of some faults in her, both public and private; but you will forgive me."

"Indeed, I agree with you but too much in all you have said; and though I see so much to admire in her, I must confess I would fain she should improve not only in principle, but also in that which makes society delightful."

"You are right. It is a great obligation when people help to keep the cheerful tone in our mind, and to chase the fret and gloom away with pleasant looks and words and cheerful accomplishments—and we are ready for any kindness towards such; but the empty head, or the one full only of dry, dull knowledge, makes the heavy countenance and the heavy conversation. I remember well a party of young officers, of what you call one of your 'crack' regiments, being asked at a party, by the lady of the house—as they were newly come into that part of the country—whether they would like to be introduced to any of the young ladies there, and the answer was, 'No; for they never knew what to say to them unless there was dancing.' That I did hear with my own ears, and I stared with astonishment. But when the supper came, and the master of the house did call for the oysters—which were then in fine season—the servant told him that the 'officers had been in before and eaten them all up!' Then I did no longer wonder, when they could do a thing so ungentlemanlike and greedy, that they should partake so much in their intellects of the nature of the creatures they were so fond in such disgraceful manner to devour."

"Disgraceful, indeed! But one thing I must say, my dear sir, as to conversation, and that is, that I am convinced the fault is as much in women as in men. If young men were in the habit of meeting with well-informed, sensible, agreeable women, they would hear things worth hearing, and have their minds drawn out and cultivated. I have felt that in my own experience. And if men do in their own families so often, as you truly say they do, only talk on dull subjects, or go to sleep, is it all their faults? Might not women animate and refine them a little? I really think they might."

"My dear young sir, I will not undertake the abuse of the ladies of your country. I leave that 'civil war' to you if you like it."

"Well, I cannot but think that if women had proper respect for themselves, men would always have proper respect for them; and then they never could meet with rudeness or disregard. I have heard girls, and women of all ages, so intensely silly in what they said, and so undignified in their conduct towards men, that it has been with difficulty that I myself could answer them with civility, and then it was more out of respect for myself than for them."

"I partly agree in what you say, but I am perhaps a little of the old school, and would treat all women, present or absent, with respect, solely because they were women. That is part of the chivalry which should be in man's character, and which he can never part with without throwing down a barrier of sentiment and high feeling, which, once destroyed, will let all other virtues pour out of him, till he is left dry and waste. Our mothers—they are women—that should sanctify the whole of that creation for us! And do you want other reasons? they are the weaker kind—therefore should be shrouded with the halo of our respect. Treat a woman with due reverence, and she will rise to her proper place, and respect herself. You think me foolish, I see—quite the drivelling old pantaloons!"

"Indeed, I do not, sir; far from it. Your words have opened to me a new and high view of the subject. The ordinary tone of feeling in the present day is certainly a very low one in most respects, and you have, I think, pointed out one great and most influential cause of it."

"I think so—I think so! I would say of 'respect' what your great dramatist says of 'mercy':—it

" 'Is twice blessed :

It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.'"

Respect others and you will be respected yourself. And now, as we are talking of these things, all in a good spirit, I would, with your permission, say a little more to you about them, because, as you may some day be father of young sons, as fine youths as yourself, you will do well to watch from the first, and bring them up early to the considerate, polished, good manners of a gentleman. I need scarcely, indeed, talk of this to you, Mr. St. Clair, your own manner is so frank, and good, and pleasing; but it may be natural to you, and you may forget to see to it in your children."

"Thank you for your exceptional compliment, my dear marquis, which is the more pleasant to me, as, if I am really tolerable in these things, it is wholly owing to her who is so dear to me. When I first knew her, I was like one newly caught out of the woods—rough, unmannered, awkward, shy——"

"What more, my dear sir! you make yourself out quite the ourang-outang—the wild man of the woods! But that I shall not credit; though I do think it likely that the gentle hand of one so sweet and lovely has smoothed you down a little. But I speak in all kind seriousness of this, because I do think your country does not fully allow the great value of these things. They call them outward! but the hand of the clock will not move to tell the hour, if the inner wheel be not there to rule it; and, say what they may, it is generally the want of the good internal feeling which makes the want of the good external manner. Who is there likes to be treated as if they were nothing at all? Does it not abash, and cast down, and wound, and many times make us angry, to be treated like the dirt of the ground—taken no notice of—pushed by as if we were something that ought not to be? Yet this is common. When you come into a public room—even when ladies are there—there is your hat still upon your head! Or you keep your chair, and seldom think to offer it to a lady, or an older man, or be ready to do any little office for them. And speaking of that reminds me *à propos* of another little scene I once saw with astonishment. It was at a morning visit I paid one day in your great London,—when a lady, who was also paying her visit, rose to go. The lady of the house got up—it was her sister-in-law—and said in a low voice to her son, a young man who sat there what you call 'lounging' in his chair—'Ring the bell, will you, for your aunt?' 'Can't she ring it for herself?' was the rude reply. I felt my flesh creep upon me! I could have taken that young unmannered fellow by the collar, and shook him till there was no life left scarce,—but I had to rush and open the door, lest that lady should be left to do that for herself too."

"My dear sir, that could scarcely have been amongst ladies and gentlemen."

"My friend, the mother of that young gentleman, and the aunt, were among the chiefest of your aristocracy. Indeed, I am grieved to say, that it is frequently among the very highest of birth that I have observed the very lowest of breeding. They think, I suppose, that it might be quite too much of the good thing, to be high-born and high-bred too! Exceptions there are indeed, and one in particular I would name, who, in a work he wrote, did on these subjects say what his own beautiful mind and manners did show forth; one whom I well knew, and did much love when in England, and who, with a joy I cannot speak, I met here most unexpectedly, in my own land, when he, three years ago, made a journey through these parts, of which the book I speak of is the account, most interesting.* There

* "Portugal and Galicia," by the (late) Lord Carnarvon.

was the true gentleman, the perfect son, the perfect brother! with the mind so accomplished, the heart so refined, the feelings so tender! He was indeed of highest blood and highest breeding too, with all that inward beautiful machinery which made the outward manner so perfect; for 'there is a grace of manner,' as he in his book, I remember, says, 'almost always associated with a grace of mind.'"

"And most charming when it is so!" exclaimed Mr. St. Clair. "But even this, your gifted friend, dear sir, only says '*almost* always associated;' and I have known those whose outward manner was but a poor index to the rich mine of excellence within."

"The more's the pity—the more's the pity! But mark you, my friend, I too would condemn no man for mere want of good manners. It may be his misfortune, that want of grace and polish; but the want of attention and civility is his fault. If one, eager to do the kind thing, rush across the room with his two arms and two legs like the four sails of the windmill, I could love that man, though to be sure one would not say of him, perhaps, that '*attitude was everything!*' But if I see a man disregarding of others, how can I love him? A good manner is certainly a great charm; but I cannot go the length of what the hovering Graces in one of Carlo Marratti's pictures are made to say: '*Senza di noi ogni fatica è vana!*' (Without us, all trouble is vain.) No! it is the good inward will that is the beautiful light that will shine through the roughest vase."

"Yes," replied Mr. St. Clair; "but certainly the polished vase will let its brightness be seen far more clearly. I remember a lady one day exclaiming,—'*How delightful the manners of the angels will be!*' and curious as the idea seemed, it led me to think with delight of the perfection there will be in those bright regions, in everything; and beautiful manners have, since then, partaken of an almost angelic nature to my mind."

"That is a high praise to give them; but if, as I said, they come from the inner heart, not too high perhaps; for it is truly a mission worthy of an angel to study the pleasure of others,—to try to keep in them the joyful frame, and to smooth the ever-passing—often sad and heavy—moments of their life. Show but a little attention—speak but a kind word, even to a stranger, the heart is pleased; a little sunshine has gone over it, and lifted perhaps some cloud which had lain heavy there before. Ah! it is a beautiful work! And granting that it is, as some say, only on the outside—though I do not grant it—but suppose it so, the outside is all we can see—all that can concern us in others; we do not live in their inside; and he who by his visible kindness and agreeableness makes one mile of this life's journey

pass pleasantly and amiably away, is a great benefactor; and if all did so, then would every mile be pleasant, and we be almost in Heaven before we reached that blessed place. Do you not agree with me, my young man?"

"Perfectly, sir, perfectly; I have thought so over and over again. But in former times, I am sorry to say, I was so little used to considering these things, that I fear I am still very often inattentive and neglectful."

"No, it was your being so different—if I may say so without paining you for your absent friends—from the other young men I had the pleasure of seeing here, that made me feel bold to speak to you as I have; for one person even may do much, if they see the thing really in its due importance, which is great; for in fact—to speak with all due reverence—it does greatly promote the 'Glory of our God in the highest, and on this earth, peace and good-will amongst men.' The love I bear your country—half my own through my dear wife—flows through my heart in streams of pleasurable feeling and affection; and I do wish so much to make your brave people see how a man's nature can endure even the real injury better than the slighting manner, and how the best deed is spoiled if done in the rough way—like the bear, killing the poor man when he would only kill the fly on his cheek. No! a gracious action, to be truly pleasant to the heart, must ever be graciously done. The debt of gratitude is the heaviest of all burthens when we cannot like the doer of the good deed; and to have your life even saved, if your feelings are insulted, is what one can hardly say, 'I thank you' for. You will excuse the old man that his friendship makes him wish that you and all your dear, so brave, so generous countrymen, should show the courteous as well as the brave heart; then you would be indeed the charming, as well as the great, the glorious nation. I would look down upon no man for want of talent—that is what he cannot command; but every one should be civil, be it to the king or to the poor man. Every one can strive to cultivate all the blessed home affections and amenities, and teach themselves the tender feeling for others, and the thoughtful care for their pleasures and comforts; therefore they are not, in truth, guiltless in the sight of God if they do not. But now, my young friend, as you have so much lamented the deficiency in your own accomplishments, you must profit by your little enforced, but to us most pleasant *séjour* here, and you must join us in our little music. My sons would be charmed to give you any little instruction you would like, and my child, she will teach you many little airs, which you can then, in your turn, teach to your beautiful young wife at home."

Mr. St. Clair thanked him, but said he feared he had no talent and no voice.

"Ah!" replied his friend, laughing, "there you are again! with your '*mauvaise honte*,' qui devrait avoir honte d'être si mauvaise (bad shame, or shyness, which ought to be ashamed of being so bad), keeping you from using your powers and gifts, because you cannot do perfection all at once. That is it, you know—all pride and vanity, not a bit modesty. Ah! I know you well, you see! But you need not fear here. We shall not laugh at you—which you English dread so much, and which keeps you back from so much good—we shall say, 'Well done for to-day, and to-morrow will be better still;' for I know you have a voice, I have heard you *fredonnant* the little airs when my sons have done singing them, otherwise I would not wish you to try, for that would be only mortification. And you might also learn to play a little the guitar. Ah! I forgot your poor arm, so useless now, and painful!" And he sighed as he fixed his eyes kindly on the disabled arm and pale countenance of the young sailor.

"Well!" said the latter, "I will try and join in with my voice as best I can."

"Do so; my sons, they shall come and help assist you downstairs this evening."

True to his word, the marquis sent his sons up in the evening to assist Mr. St. Clair down to the drawing-room. It was the first time he had seen Donna Mercedes since their last interesting conversation; but that was no time for explanations, and he was soon called upon to fulfil his engagement of aiding in the general concert. One of the brothers played on the pianoforte, another on the guitar, and all, with the old marquis occasionally striking in, poured forth their voices in fullest volume in order to give courage to Mr. St. Clair's faint attempts; while Donna Mercedes, sitting on a low couch near, often raised her head from her work, as she joined her thrilling voice to the others, her countenance varying with every sentiment expressed by the words she sung, her wondrous eyes, now flashing with the fire of enthusiasm, now melting into the softest tenderness, now beaming with the loftiest emotions. To gaze upon her was like looking upon some beauteous pageant, where scene succeeded scene in quick succession. Mr. St. Clair, too, carried away by the excitement of the moment, forgot his fears, and let his really fine voice bear its full part in the concert. *Romance* after *romance* was chanted forth, *chœur* after *chœur*, till in a perfect

state of enthusiasm, their voices waited not for accompaniment, but poured forth the stream of harmony without pause or stop; falling from one thing to another, like the successive steps of a cascade, till, amused at their own excitement, they ended in a general chorus of laughter.

"Well done! well done!" exclaimed the marquis, in a perfect ecstasy; "that was delightful! And ah! Mr. St. Clair, my old ears listened for the new voice amid all that crash and noise, and they were quick enough to hear it put in the good notes. Oh! you will soon learn our music; and then Fernan will teach you the bass which you shall put to some of my daughter's songs."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

I have a Comforter on high; a Comforter whose consolations are most nigh when they are needed most, and are never breathed vainly on the heart.

WHEN Mr. St. Clair went down into the drawing-room the next day, he found Donna Mercedes, who was copying Mary Sydney's picture; she having asked him to let her do so, as she thought it so beautiful, and her father had wished her to do it.

She looked up and welcomed him as he entered; but then a long silence ensued.

"I fear I shall never do justice to this countenance," she said at length, "and it has for me such fascination, that I can do little but gaze upon it. You must find yourself very happy in being so loved by one like this, Mr. St. Clair."

"Yes, it is indeed happiness! And yet not perfect, Donna Mercedes, for we are separated."

"Not in heart," she replied.

Again they were silent. Mr. St. Clair looked with sadness on her sorrowful countenance.

After a time she began again, tremulously and timidly: "When last we talked together, Mr. St. Clair—of a sudden, such a look came over you—such a great change of your countenance; what was it?"

He felt painfully embarrassed, and strove to turn the subject. But she was too deeply interested to suffer him to do so; and by continuous questions, obtained at length the fatal information that she sought. She learned that Norman Bruce loved ano-

ther. She was evidently much affected, though she strove to conceal it; and urging her questions still further, she found also that he was unhappy in his attachment. Covering her face, she burst into tears.

"Not happy!" she murmured; "who then shall be loved?"

Mr. St. Clair dared not speak, he dreaded her asking more.

"Ah, my good friend," she continued, "you who have so happy a love, can you not feel for him?"

"God knows how deeply," he replied.

"And you have seen him since this? And how did he bear it?"

"Dear Donna Mercedes," said Mr. St. Clair, trying to speak cheerfully, "you know such things must be felt; but he has a proud as well as a noble spirit, and in time I doubt not, the pain of the trial will pass. His is a stirring life, you know, and that helps both heart and memory to cast off their burthens."

"But," she continued, after a pause, "did she love another first?"

"She did; and all that we can do now, Donna Mercedes, is to pray that God the Comforter may be with him; or rather, indeed, to praise God that the Comforter has already revealed Himself to him—for you will rejoice to hear that his heart is truly turned to God."

"For that, I do indeed thank God," she exclaimed. "Poor, and weak, and ignorant as I am, I do yet know that there is peace with Him and with no other, and that at His throne of mercy and tender love, all may find rest. . . . But when was this?" she added, in a hurried voice.

"This last year," he murmured.

"So late! and just when you were so happy!" And she looked at him with an expression almost of reproach.

"Did you know her?" she continued.

He started up in great agitation, and went to the window.

"Dear Donna Mercedes," he said at length, returning to the table, and endeavouring to speak calmly, "I saw him in his distress, and the remembrance is always painful to me; though I know that his feelings are much more tranquil now."

"You will tell me at least that she was worthy of his love?"

"She was."

"And lovely?"

He made a silent sign in the affirmative, but the violent flush of emotions that overspread his face in a moment suggested to her the truth. She glanced from him to the picture before her, and back to him again, with a look of wild inquiry—her white lips quivering with agitation. His eyes gently and sadly met hers; she read their meaning, and again burst into tears.

At length looking up, she smiled proudly as she said:

"Well did you call him noble, Mr. St. Clair, if he loves you still." Then in a low voice, fearful of having betrayed her own feelings, she added: "I am foolish to feel so much for my poor cousin."

"Oh! no, Donna Mercedes," said Mr. St. Clair, moved to his very soul by the sight of her distress, and filled with admiration at the generous beauty of her character, "but remember, that though the sorrow falls fresh on your heart, from his its first bitterness has long passed away, and I trust that with God's blessing on his manly efforts, and on his noble, disinterested friendship, he will soon rise above his trial, strengthened and purified."

"Your words are comforting," she said. "Yes, I see that his great, first sorrow must be past; and I feel more than ever, that it is in God alone we must trust for strength and peace. But this has come such a sudden shock upon me! for I always imaged him to myself, the same bright, joyful creature, with eyes so full of life and glorious happiness, that he used to be when we strayed about his beautiful country together. Oh! it is well the good God hides from us many things!"

"And well too that He shows us many things: the riches of His grace—His tender compassions, and abounding mercies!"

"Yes," she replied, "our gracious God will never lay His hand too heavily on His poor children's head. But now," as she rose to leave the room, "I must thank you, Mr. St. Clair, for your patience with my foolish tears, and for your sympathy too with my dear cousin."

"That sympathy," said Mr. St. Clair, "adds another link to the chain that binds me so truly to you, Donna Mercedes; my deep, and most respectful regard for you can never cease but with my life."

"Nor then," she said, pointing upward with a radiant smile.

"Nor then, and thank you for that joyful thought—the only one that can give sure value to any earthly affection."

No friendship here can yield us pure delight
Unless 'tis view'd e'en now from the celestial height."

"A beautiful thought, and how true! Yes! I can now look down from the good God's high and holy hill, and His clear sunshine of blessing will light upon my heart, and upon yours, and on my cousin's too. And," she added, at the door of the apartment, "if we can meet quietly again sometimes, Mr. St. Clair, you will speak to me perhaps of the beautiful things you have learnt yourself, and teach me to love my gracious, tender-feeling God more and more."

CHAPTER XXXV.

Come home ! there is a sorrowing breath
In music since ye went ;
And the early flower-scents wander by,
With mournful memories blent.
O ye beloved ! come home !—the hour
Of many a greeting tone,
The time of hearth-light, and of song
Returns, and ye are gone !
And darkly, heavily it falls
On the forsaken room ;
Burthening the heart with tenderness
That deepens 'midst the gloom.

MRS. HEMANS.

A LETTER from England !

In an ecstasy Mr. St. Clair seized it. But it was with an agony of disappointment that he saw it was not from Mary. It was from Captain Seymour, telling him that he had been, he was happy to say, honourably acquitted as to the loss of his ship ; and that though he could not then expect another, yet that the other officers, including Mr. St. Clair, were appointed to a vessel which had lately been commissioned, and was immediately to take the place of his own unfortunate one on the African station. It would be ready for sailing, he said, in a fortnight ; and as Mr. St. Clair would by that time, it was supposed, be fit to join, it would lay-to for him off Vigo. " This," he kindly added, " will be, I fear, a most disappointing arrangement for you, but I know not how to get it better managed."

Disappointing ! it was maddening !

" Set forth afresh on his long banishment without seeing Mary, when that hope had been before him day and night for weeks—he could not do it ! He must return to England, and satisfy the yearning craving of his heart, if only for one moment !" He paced the room in a state of frenzy ! Then ringing the bell, he begged the servant to find out if there were not any means by which he could start that night, or the next day, for England, by sea—by land—in any vessel—any conveyance, he cared not how !

He then went down and informed his friends of the communication he had received, and of the necessity he was under of quitting their kind roof almost immediately.

There were universal exclamations of regret.

"If you will go, I too shall go with you!" exclaimed Don Fernan, the youngest of the brothers, and the favourite with Mr. St. Clair, to whom he had always shown a special regard.

"Indeed you shall not," said the latter, smiling at his warmth. "Why should you go tossing about on such roads, or such seas, with a wilful fellow like me?"

"If you go—I go," reiterated the young man, starting up in his energy, as if he were to set off instantly. Then turning gracefully and reverentially towards his father, he spoke rapidly in his own tongue, with earnest gesticulation, and with eyes that flashed a thousand friendly fires. His father smiled as he looked at him, and nodding his assent, turned to Mr. St. Clair, and said:

"Fernan is right; it would never do to let you go from us alone, with your one useless arm, and no creature to help you. No! he quite pleases his father, and he must go for certain with you; it will make me and all of us much more happy and easy about you. And he will be much pleased too, to go to England for a little visit, for he has friends there who will be glad to see him."

Mr. St. Clair could say no more, and was in fact delighted at the thoughts of having such a companion; and the door opening at that moment, the servant whom he had asked to make inquiries respecting conveyances came in, and said that no vessel of any kind was going, but that a carriage could be had to take him either to Corunna, or on the road to France, or anywhere he liked, in an hour's time.

A consultation was then held as to the best route to pursue, and it was determined that they should go first to Corunna, and failing of finding any vessel there, try the other ports of the coast, as far as Bayonne; when, in case of final disappointment as to transport by sea, they should make their way through France for Calais, whence they could of course reach England without delay.

Mr. St. Clair longed to set forth instantly; but he did not like to propose a night journey at the first outset to his companion. It was therefore settled that the carriage should be at the door at daybreak the next morning, when they were to start, accompanied by Velasquez—the servant who had always waited on Mr. St. Clair, and who was on that account selected to go with them by his considerate host.

The necessary orders were then given; and when Velasquez was told that Don Fernan was going with Mr. St. Clair, and that he himself was to accompany the young men, his mingled look of astonishment and delight was so comic, that a peal of laughter burst from every one, in which the wonder-struck, but good-humoured servant, joined heartily himself. Then making a

sudden retreat, without word spoken, he rushed to announce the news, with infinite triumph to the rest of the household—for a journey to England was reckoned among them the *ne plus ultra* of importance and delight!

But time sped on, and it was thought well that the party should retire early to rest, as they were to set forth so soon in the morning. Mr. St. Clair was not however inclined to sleep, and he stood at the casement for some time watching the rolling of the waves in the moonlight, and thinking how, but for the saving mercy of God, he would have gone down to their cold depths as so many of the others had done.

He raised his eyes in earnest devotion to God, and besought that his prolonged existence might be honoured by having much given him to do for the sake of Him—his Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer! He prayed fervently for those whose kindness and friendship had been so delightful to him; and could not but lay his earnest wish also before God, that it might please Him that the sweet and lovely daughter of that house might in time have her strong affection returned by its object, and that Bruce might find in her love a full compensation for his present sorrow.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“Let me weep awhile!

Bear with me—give the sudden passion way!
Thoughts of our own lost home, our sunny isle,
Come as a wind that o’er a reed hath sway,
Till my heart dies with yearning and sick tears;—
Oh! could my life melt from me in these tears!”
“Yes! weep, my sister! weep, till from thy heart
The weight flow forth.”

MRS. HEMANS.

In another chamber of that mansion, another was also watching through those still hours. Donna Mercedes was copying the picture of her rival.

She had knelt with that picture in her hand till she had been enabled to look on it again with kindness, and to desire the friendship of one she fancied must be good as she was fair.

She might herself well have served for a study to a painter at that moment, as she sat in the soft-gleaming lamp-light, her black waving hair—which for the greater ease she had released from all confinement—flowing down over her cheeks and shoulders, and throwing deep partial shadows over her countenance;

—that countenance, heart-elevated by the task she had imposed on herself, and the inward thought which accompanied it—looking so pure, and pale, and beautiful!

"Yes! I shall love her!" she exclaimed at length, raising her head from her work, yet keeping her eye fixed upon the picture, whose soft, deep-thoughtful look seemed to sink into her heart; "yes, I shall love her, and she will be my sister, and teach me to be more what she is."

And yet she was so young she thought, to be so sorrowful! and the full tears gathered, and fell, and blotted the painting—as tears so often do the beautiful things of earth!

She wiped them from the ivory; but her eyes were painful with weeping, and she had caught, she thought, the likeness, and could better repair the mischief her tears had done by daylight. Hearing sounds in the house, she opened her door, and finding that they came from her brother Fernan's room, she softly crept along the passage, and knocked at his door. She was readily admitted. He was her favourite brother, and the seeing him preparing for departure overcame again her excited spirits; and flying to his arms, she wept upon his breast.

"Why are those tears?" he asked, in his own fine language. "Why art thou not, my soul! tranquil, and asleep in thy bed?"

She could not answer, but threw her arms round him, and pressed him to her heart.

"Mercedes," he exclaimed, "why shouldst thou weep? I shall not leave thee long, and go but on pleasure, and for friendship's sake to watch over this young sailor."

She strove to master her tears, and looked up into that dear face whose smile had ever been as the warmth of the sun to her. He sat down with her, her weary head resting on his shoulder; yet still the tears would flow.

"Why dost thou weep, Mercedes, my angel?" he asked again.

She answered him by repeating those beautiful lines of Victor Hugo's:—

*"Si près de toi, quelqu'un pleure en rêvant,
Laisse pleurer, sans en chercher la cause.
Pleurer est doux, pleurer est bon souvent,
Pour l'homme, hélas! sur qui le sort se pose.
Toute larme, enfant!
Lave quelque chose."*

(If near thee, one should chance to weep while thinking,
Let him weep on, and seek not for the cause.
Weeping is sweet, weeping is good sometimes,
For man, alas! on whom fate deeply weighs.
Each tear, child!
Washes out something.)

"But what is the 'quelque chose' ('something'), my dearest! which needs the washing of thy costly tears? Why is there trouble in thy heart?"

"Ah! Fernan, we are sad sometimes—even without—and I was weary." And she pressed her cheek to his, half in fondness, and half to hide the glow his question kindled there.

"But what weight is there upon thy mind, Mercedes, dearest? What is there that thou canst not tell thy brother?"

She was silent, longing to pour forth her heart to him, though that she could not do. She threw her arm around his neck, and pressed her lips again and again to his cheek, as if bespeaking his patience, his tenderness, his love.

He felt her affection wind round his heart,—felt too her clinging dependence upon him; and straining her fondly to him, he murmured low:

"Keep then thy secret, Mercedita! my joy, my flower! No evil can harbour in that pure heart. And when thou shalt like to tell it, come again to Fernan—again lay thy head upon his shoulder, again press thy cheek to his cheek, and whisper all thy heart to his heart. Ever wilt thou find in him a friend."

"Ever—always? Fernan."

"Ever—always!"

A knock was heard at the door, and Velasquez' voice announced the hour at which he had been desired to call his young master.

The brother and sister rose; and once more pressing her to his heart, Don Fernan said:

"And now, my dearest, thou shalt leave me, for I have much to do. Keep up thy heart, my life! and let the roses spring again in thy cheeks ere Fernan return. What shall he bring thee back?"

"Himself, Fernan!" she replied, looking up to those dear eyes which showered looks of unclouded love upon her.

He began anew to busy himself with sundry little preparations for his journey which her entrance had suspended, and she with heavy steps, returned to her chamber to prepare herself to go down stairs. She bound up her hair, and threw a shawl around her, for the air of the morning was chill, and then went down to see that breakfast was prepared for the travellers. Finding that all was ready, she returned to her brother's room. She had taken Mary Sydney's picture with her to show it to him, but when she was about to do so, she could not. They went down together, and Mr. St. Clair soon joined them, and then the marquis and his other sons.

Breakfast ended, the carriage was announced and they rose to part. Donna Mercedes placed the picture in her father's hand

that he might return it to Mr. St. Clair; and he approaching him with it said, in a voice which shook with a little emotion:

"Here, my dear young sir, take from me once again, with a thousand thanks, this picture which I first in this country put into your hand when it was so cold and weak. I little thought at that moment, to what great friendship our hearts would grow, but I thank the good God for it; for to meet with those we can trust and love, is to strew our earthly path with the pleasant flowers, and the bright jewels. May the good God be with you, and with her, so beautiful! whom you love; and may your days be long, and your sunshine be unclouded!"

Mr. St. Clair took the picture, and kissed the old man's hand with fervour, but found it difficult to speak. The marquis embraced him warmly, as did his young friends; when turning to Donna Mercedes he once more bent his knee before her, and pressed her hand to his brow. She was agitated, and longed to speak to him, yet knew not what she wished to say; when catching her brother Fernan's eye, she threw herself into his arms once again, and wept tears drawn from so many sources!

"Come, come! my child," said the marquis, after looking at them both with a quivering lip for an instant, "Fernan will soon be back. Look up and give some cheerful message for your English friends."

CHAPTER, XXXVII.

Wilful we are—and seek our wills full oft
By ways so rough and rude, we would not brook
To use them, but for the bright point in view.
That draws us on through brier, and brake, and flood—
Lures through the flame, and bids o'erleap the rock,
—Well if we crash not in the chasm beyond!

C. L.

THE travellers started.

Those who had never chanced to become acquainted with the peculiarities of Spanish travelling in some parts, might have been astonished at the sight of the vehicle in which they set off on their journey. It was in form a large coach, scarlet in colour, and painted with wreaths of roses.* It had no stuffing in the

* This was chiefly taken from an account of a journey in the south, not
th of Spain.

inside, nor springs on the out; and was not therefore particularly calculated to benefit an arm whose fracture was but slightly knit,—especially in roads which were of the worst. Six horses drew this cumbrous though not very ponderous machine, driven all “in hand”—the man who drove them sitting on a high standard box. Another man ran along by the side of the carriage or occasionally clung on, continually filling his hands and pockets with pebbles and tufts of grass, with which to pelt the heads of the leaders, in order to assist the manœuvres of the driver, and indicate with more precision to the animals themselves, the course it was wished they should pursue. From time to time he would clamber up on the box of the carriage while it was going at full pace, and take the reins; while his comrade, in an equally fearless manner, would descend, and commence operations on the heads of the leaders, in his turn.

At times when the roads were quite intolerable, a cross-cut was deemed advisable; on which occasions it was necessary to proceed at full gallop in order to get well over any impediment of hedge or ditch which might occur. On the whole it was not easy travelling; and those who were inside, besides being shaken in the most inconceivable manner, were forced to keep every muscle in tension in order to prevent being continually tossed from side to side, and thrown quite off the seats.

The situation of Velasquez—on the box, by the driver—was still more deplorable! Never had gratified ambition placed a man on a more giddy height! He clung desperately to the hard seat as the vehicle performed its *saltos* over all the impediments in its way; now sent backward with a jerk, now pitched forwards as if about to fall on the horses;—his eyes all the while starting from their sockets with exertion and terror.

Don Fernan had told him he might come inside if he preferred it; but he was too respectful to do that, though he could hardly conceal his sufferings and deadly fears.

On therefore they went, up hill, down vale, over hedge and ditch, till they arrived at Caldas, where they stopped for the first night.

Two more days' suffering brought them to Corunna;—place of disastrous, but honourable fame to an Englishman!—and there, to Mr. St. Clair's unspeakable delight, in the beautiful little bay—slowly emitting a thin cloud of vapour—lay the English steamer.

A favourable passage brought them quickly to Portsmouth. It was early morning when they arrived, yet Captain Seymour—who had thought it possible that Mr. St. Clair might come

over by the steamer—was there when they landed,—and with him Mr. Bruce. The greetings of the friends were enthusiastic; and the young Spaniard, who had all the vivacity of a boy,—threw himself into his cousin's arms, and embraced him with the greatest energy, undismayed by the presence of numerous spectators. They existed not indeed for him; for his whole heart was absorbed by the fervent pleasure of seeing again one, long-loved, and from whom he had been long parted.

Captain Seymour then came in for his share of his cordial words, as Mr. St. Clair, having first been warmly welcomed by him, turned to Mr. Bruce. The friends grasped each other's hands in silence; while floods of "voiceless thoughts" seemed to flow from the one to the other.

They walked together a little apart; but Captain Seymour quickly following them, laid a detaining hand on Mr. St. Clair's shoulder, saying, in a low tone:—

"Your ship sails the day after to-morrow—earlier than was expected. I thought I had best tell you at once, as you might wish to leave Portsmouth."

Mr. St. Clair spoke a choking word of thanks; then regaining his friend, said:—

"I must be off directly, Bruce; the ship sails the day after to-morrow."

"I know it does," he replied; "so ordered a chaise to be in readiness in case you came. I have a relation at Hastings whom I am wanting to see, so I shall go with you, or rather you will go with me."

"No! that will never do; I should have gone had it cost me——"

"Nonsense! I tell you I've got the chaise, and if you don't go with me, I shall go alone, that's all."

"Pshaw! What relation have you at Hastings? You're the best fellow in the world, but you're not going to pay my journey for all that."

"Well, we'll share it then—will that satisfy your fastidious worship? and you shall pay me when——. Come! let us be off; we've a good day's work before us, and you should be back by mid-day to-morrow. Don Fernan," he then said, stopping and turning round to him, "I grieve to say that my ship sails earlier than I thought, and I must go and see my mother and others, far from this place, so that I fear that I must leave you now. But to-morrow, or the next day, I shall hope to see you again, and try to express—what no words however have power to do—my deep sense of your excessive kindness to me, and the grateful love I feel, and ever must feel, for you and all your family."

"And must you so soon go?" said Don Fernan; "I much regret it. Norman and I will then stay together, and wait your return here."

"No, Fernan," said Mr. Bruce, "I must go with him; I cannot otherwise see anything of him. But when we return, then, I shall be delighted to be with you. I'm so sorry to leave you so immediately, but you'll not be offended?"

"Offended! me? why should I be offended? Go, go, by all means. And for him—he is happy! What would I give for that carriage which could take me to my mother again! The sight of you, Norman," he continued as they all walked together to the inn, "stirs the old memories within me, till I could sit down and cry like a child."

A chaise and four was standing at the door of the hotel when they reached it, into which the two young sailors threw their portmanteaus and then themselves; then taking hearty leave of their friends, away they flew like the wind.

Don Fernan and Velasquez watched them till they were out of sight, and then imparted their opinions to each other as to the difference in the modes of travelling in England and Spain; the latter, by tortuous writhings and eloquent gestures of countenance and limb, endeavouring to convey some idea of the sufferings he had endured when on the dreadful box of the scarlet coach.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel.

SHAKESPEARE.

MILE after mile flew by; but the travellers sat by each other in silence. At length:—

"St. Clair!" said Bruce.

"Bruce!" said Mr. St. Clair.

"Do you know, old fellow! there have been strange stories afloat about you!"

"Have there? What about?"

"About you, I tell you."

"What about, about me?"

"What about? why, they say you've been making desperate love to my cousin down there, who is as beautiful as the day and that your illness was all a feint to stay there with her."

"Do they say so?"

"Yes! they do; and her brother's coming over here with you won't lay the report, I'm afraid; and though I am glad enough to see him for my own sake, yet for yours I'm sorry he's come."

"I'm not the least, for I delight in him; and I care not an iota for any such reports. No one will ever believe them who knows me, and whose good opinion I value."

Mr. Bruce's colour rose as this was said, though he evidently strove to keep it down, looking hard, as he had done from the commencement of the conversation, out of the window before him.

"I don't believe all that was told me," he said, after a moment's pause, "but——"

"If you don't fully believe it, it's evident you don't fully disbelieve it, and that's enough."

He paused; his breast swelling with indignation, and every feeling which could oppress a noble heart under a sense of unjust suspicion from a friend.

Mr. Bruce was embarrassed; but after a minute, he answered—

"You're too hasty, St. Clair; if I had fully believed this report, should I have been on the quay this morning expecting your arrival? or should I have had the chaise ready prepared for you? You know I should not; though it would be scarcely perhaps, saying all the truth, if I affirmed that, after what I heard, I wholly disbelieved your having in some way or other played the fool abroad."

"Played the fool! played the villain, you'd better say."

"No; I should be sorry to call every man a villain who does such things."

"I shouldn't. I call every man a villain who makes love to any woman when he does not purpose, if he can, to marry her; and I don't know what other name he, above all, could deserve, who, situated as I was with regard to one woman, could make even a shadow of love to another."

"Well! you mightn't have made even 'a shadow of love,' as you call it; but you might nevertheless, in some way or other, by misconstruction, or her vanity, or something, have got yourself into a scrape with her."

"She has *no* vanity, and I got into *no* scrape with her. What you heard was doubtless from that inf—— But I'll not talk of him now; it makes me in too boiling a rage even to think of him."

"Sangrove, I suppose you mean. It was he who spoke of it; and certainly he made his story out very plausibly."

A storm of passion rushed through Mr. St. Clair's breast,

but with a mighty effort he controlled it. He hastily let down the glass, and leant forward to catch the cooling air.

As it blew against his heated forehead and flushed cheeks, his pulse quieted down, and the momentary raising of the heart, with that universal panacea of the upright: "Thou God knowest!" brought down its invariable peace. He drew up the window again, for the air was chill, and leant back in the chaise in silence.

"If my thoughts have done you wrong, I beg your pardon," said Mr. Bruce, coldly; and he held out his hand. Mr. St. Clair took it lightly, saying:—

"The pledge of forgiveness—yes! of friendship—no!"

"You'll regret this, St. Clair," said Mr. Bruce, with a fiery glance. "If I did you wrong in classing you too much perhaps with other foolish fellows, at least I strove to enable you to right yourself quickly where it was most important you should do so."

In an instant every cloud vanished from Mr. St. Clair's heart; his whole soul gushed towards his friend again. He grasped his hand.

"Yes!" he exclaimed, "that remembrance should have made me bear anything—everything—from you; even—almost—dishonour!"

"Not that, St. Clair," said Mr. Bruce, as he returned his friend's vehement pressure; "no thought of mine could ever deliberately dishonour you; though I do fear I may have done you great, unpardonable injustice. But what was told me was most staggering."

"You should not have believed it, Bruce. But now I will explain the thing as it was, and you'll readily understand it." And he related the affair as it had occurred.

"Dear Mercedes!" said Mr. Bruce, "I can but remember her as the most lovely little girl in the world, but can image her completely as you speak, in her quick anger, and her as quick and beautiful forgiveness. That fellow is indeed base to have forged such a tale from so slight an incident."

"What did he make of it?"

Mr. Bruce repeated what had been said

"It will never do for him and me to be penned up in the same ship together again," said Mr. St. Clair; his whole frame trembling with indignation.

"So he thinks himself, I imagine; for when he finds he is appointed to the —, he gets leave—goes to see his mother (whom I wish joy of her son), falls ill all of a sudden, threatens to die, and declines the honour of serving his Majesty in his good ship —."

"I am most thankful for it, for something must have happened had we ever met again And now tell me, Bruce, have you seen anything lately of Captain Normanton?"

"Seen him! yes, that have I, and no later than yesterday. He has been in Portsmouth some days."

"Do you think he has heard anything of this?"

"I know he has; and that was one thing that made me anxious you should set off for this place, near Hastings, without delay."

"My good fellow!"

"Don't 'good fellow' me," he exclaimed with much annoyance, and a flush which the sudden touching of some painful chord caused to mount to his very forehead.

They changed horses, and again the milestones were left rapidly behind, but neither of them seemed inclined to speak—Mr. St. Clair from delicacy, Mr. Bruce because he was embarrassed at his outbreak of irritable feeling.

He determined, however, to get over that; so began at last—so suddenly, as to make his companion start—taking up the conversation as if he had never left it off—

"I've not seen Miss Sydney since I wrote to you; so I don't know whether the story has reached her or not; but it is sure to do so, sooner or later, so it is as well you should give your own version of it first."

"She'll not believe it!" said Mr. St. Clair, with a smile of proud and loving confidence.

Mr. Bruce looked at him again—it would be difficult to say with what expression.

"She may, however, like to know what led you to Mercedes' feet," he observed, coolly.

"She shall if she wish it, and know all to the very word and letter; but she alone of all the world, though,"—he added, with rather a bitter smile,—“she is probably the only one of all the world who would fully trust me without knowing it.”

They were now nearly arrived at their destination. It was one of those soft evenings in November, when the winds which have sighed through the almost leafless trees during the day, sink to rest with the setting sun, and leave a peculiar calm and stillness in the air. The fine constellations always visible at that season of the year shone with a mild lustre; and when the travellers mounted the last high down before descending upon Hastings, the sea lay stretched in silvery tranquillity before—
—the moon, just past the full, rising out of it, and causing

the little path of trembling light which Sirius had made across its waveless waters gradually to disappear.

Mr. Bruce pointed to her, as she stole silently up the sky, and murmured those lines :—

“ And when the moon riseth as she were dreaming,
And treadeth with white feet the lullèd sea,
Go, silent as a star beneath her gleaming,
And think of——”

He stopped short, and threw himself back in the chaise.

“ I stay here,” he said, with forced gaiety, as they entered the town, “ with ‘ my relation.’ You can take care of yourself, I suppose, fair sir, for half an hour’s further drive?” And he spoke with that bitter levity, which his tone sometimes assumed when his thoughts were painful,—turning again on his companion that look “ of many colours,” which was so dreadful to him.

“ Where then, and when do we meet again?” said Mr. St. Clair, in a low voice, as if fearful to break in upon such feelings.

“ Choose your own time, *mon ami*,” said the other. “ You’ll be sure to find me—‘ *séant* in the parlour, or *passant* in the garden,’ anywhere, in short, you like—but the Parade. It’s *your* ship you’ll remember that’s going to sail, so it’s your look-out to be back in time. Let’s see—we set off about seven this morning, and it’s now six; so it takes us good eleven hours to get here, and you’ve got to go further still. You *must* be back to-morrow night, or by dawn next day at latest—for it’s impossible to say at what hour the ship may sail—and I’ll answer for it you’ve not got a stitch of things ready to put on board.”

“ That I certainly have not.”

“ I thought so! Just like you! However, Captain Seymour and I looked to that for you in case the ship had to pick you up in Spain, so you’ll find things enough stowed away for you. Well now! what time shall you be back here?”

“ Do you mind travelling at night?”

“ Not I! it’s all the same to me; only you must allow a couple of hours more, at least, for knocking the fellows up out of their beds.”

“ Well then, I’ll try and be here by two to-morrow. It would be best to be back by night. After two then, if you go out, leave word where you are, will you?”

“ You be here by two!” said Mr. Bruce, nodding his head backwards contemptuously. “ However, I’ll leave word certainly. And now, good-bye, old fellow! Take care of yourself; and depend upon it, I’ll be ready at two to-morrow.”

He jumped out as the chaise stopped at the door of the hotel,

and they shook hands at parting—but the grasp was cordial on neither side.

The drivers had their directions to go on to Hollington, where the Sydneys lived, and Mr. St. Clair was whirled off again alone.

It would be difficult to say which of the two friends felt the most thoroughly uncomfortable when they parted.

As Mr. St. Clair sat brooding in the corner of the chaise, with what force did many of the Marquis Villa Hermosa's words recur to him—when he said that "The best deed is spoiled if done in a bad manner,"—that "A gracious action, to be pleasant to the heart, must ever be graciously done,"—that "He who makes a mile of this life's journey pass pleasantly, is a great benefactor."

"Ah!" he thought, "how true! An angel from Heaven could hardly be more noble, more generous than Bruce, and yet his manner often makes the obligation sit so heavy on the heart!"

Ah! what long miles, indeed, of troubled feeling had most of those been to him, which would, but for that, have been miles of ecstasy!—what floods of sunshine had been overcast by clouds of discomfort! so that now, even within a few minutes of seeing Mary—that time to which he had looked, with such excess of happiness—his mind was unhinged, his heart troubled, his spirit saddened. And all by what? By another's ungracious way of doing a most gracious thing! Rather would he have been at all the expense of his journey a hundred times, than have had this blight thrown over these few brief hours which might otherwise have been so happy!—rather a thousand, thousand times, than that this wretched alienation, for even a moment, should have been felt between his heart and the being whose acts deserved his best friendship and highest admiration.

Often as he had lamented Mr. Bruce's harsh and brusque way of speaking, never had he felt its painful effects so much as at that moment, when his long and intimate intercourse with those of kind and polished manners had made him so sensible of anything that was the reverse.

Mere anger can easily be forgiven, and what is more, forgotten; but the slighting word, the contemptuous expression—it is these that sink so deep into the heart—so deep, that the hand of him who has flung them cannot reach, to recall them.

What man's hand however cannot do, the unshortened arm of the Omnipotent can effect in a moment. One thought of his forgiving God plucked out every sting from Mr. St. Clair's

heart, and showers of soothing feelings fell brightly in their place. He recalled all his friend's most generous actions—actions which few indeed would have thought of for any one, but which he willingly performed for a successful rival. His heart melted within him, and abundant prayer flowed forth, that the blessing of God might requite him a thousand-fold; and elevated by these feelings, and with peace again at his heart, he began once more to enjoy the bright prospect before him.

Mr. Bruce meanwhile, after getting out of the chaise at the hotel, walked forth, first on the grassy slopes of the hill by the ruins of the old castle, and then by the sea, "which lay in silvery silence, breathing long sighs along the shore." There he stood, and tried to still the tumult in his heart; suffering far more from the consciousness of his fault, than from the thought even of his unhappiness. In that, he had the mighty power of God's help, and the sense of his own generous feelings to sustain him; but by the other, he felt degraded in his own eyes, and therefore—necessarily—miserable.

"Strange!" he thought, "that I should feel willing to do so much for him in that which is the destruction of my own happiness, and yet cannot forbear saying those bitter things, and showing those petty feelings which vex and hurt him to the very quick!"

He walked about with these reflections gnawing at his heart, or stood abstractedly gazing on the sea, though unconscious of its beauty, till he too thought of God's pardoning love. And then he too found peace again—there—on that tranquil shore,—“the landing-place of mercies, because the starting-point of prayer;” and humbled, yet with elevated heart, he dared once more look up with confidence to his offended, yet “indulgent Saviour.”

The one from beneath the broad clear moonshine by the sea—the other from the flickering shade of o'erarching trees sent up his spirit to the throne of grace. There did they meet—there were they reconciled—and thence did they return again in peace and glad repose.

“To each unknown his brother's prayer;
Yet brethren true in dearest love
Were they—

* * * *

“E'en so, the course of prayer who knows?
It springs in silence where it will;
Springs out of sight, and flows
At first a lonely rill.

"But streams shall meet it by-and-by,
From thousand sympathetic hearts ;
Together swelling high,
Their chant of many parts."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Yonder lights !—cheerful and pleasant they look here. Who knows what weariness and misery—what vain hopes, and sick hearts they may be lighting !—MERKLAND.

"AND Mary, my dearest mother !" exclaimed Mr. St. Clair, after the first moments given to affection, "where is she ? I must go to her, my time is so short."

"Not yet, Wilfred," she replied in evident uneasiness. "You had better have something first, and then perhaps——"

"Why not now, dear mother ? What is food to me, in comparison of seeing her ?"

"General Sydney is not well, and it would not do to disturb him. Wait with a little patience, and when he goes to bed, which he does early, I will send to beg her to come here. In short, my dear Wilfred, I will not seek to conceal from you that his sentiments towards you are not what they were, and I am sure he would feel the greatest annoyance at seeing you, or knowing even that you were here."

"Why ? what has happened ?"

"That which Mary always feared—that when you were away, Captain Normanton would obtain more power than ever over him."

"Does he come down here then ?"

"Yes, very often ; and it is very trying for her." Mr. St. Clair walked up and down in great agitation.

"Tell me all," he said at length. "Does he think—the old man—to break off our engagement ? Does he press this horrid marriage on her ?"

"I fancy he does ; and how thankful I am that you persuaded him, before you went, to give his formal consent to your engagement."

"It would have made no difference to us, mother ; we are bound to each other, heart and soul."

"Of course, as to that, it would not ; but I much doubt whether, with her tender conscience, her path would have been so clearly right to her as it is now that his sanction has been obtained."

"Perhaps not. Yes! every way—every way, I am most thankful for it. But what can that man be made of, that he can endure to think of forcing, or bribing a consent from her—that he should dare to urge her to forget her vows?"

"I do not know that he has ever actually done that. It seems to me as if he rather tried to supplant you—to shake her faith—and persuade her she is not bound to you; for I know he has spoken of your engagement as a childish thing which her father's word could set aside at any moment—if indeed you did not weary of it yourselves."

"Weary? weary? Little does he know what real heart-affection is! His is a fury—a whirlwind—sweeping down all before it—and blinding him to the commonest dictates of feeling and honour. How different to our love—refreshing and rejoicing the very springs of our being! Oh! mother, mother! how can we ever weary of such a love?"

"I did not say you could, my child,"—and the tears came into her eyes at sight of his emotion, "I know well you could not; but Captain Normanton tries to persuade her that very young men *cannot* be constant—that it is natural that they should quickly like and quickly forget when 'a new flower,' as he expressed himself one day, 'springs up in their paths.'"

"Well! it is not so with me at any rate; for I have been for weeks and weeks with one of earth's loveliest 'flowers,' yet never did one thought—one shadow of a thought—for an instant stray from Mary. But now, something I must do towards seeing her."

"I will go with you then, and we will see what can be done. Here is your coffee; drink it, while I go and put on my shawl."

She soon returned, and they set off together. The air was calm and soft, and the moon, now riding high in the heavens, shone white on the silvery dew that lay all around.

"He is not gone to bed," observed Mrs. St. Clair, as they came within sight of General Sydney's house, "for I see the light from the window still, looking so cheerful! Would that the light in their hearts were as bright!"

"And is that very small cottage theirs?" he said, stopping short—shrinking from the idea of its being so. "Well! I could be happy there!" and he hastened forward again.

It *was* a very small cottage—white, with green outside shutters, enclosed in a paling, and with a little grass-plot, and a few beds of flowers in front.

There was one creeper trained round an upper window. He did not need telling what that was. They paused when nearly opposite the house. The bright blaze of the fire, and the lamp's

clear light shone on the figures of those who were in the room, and it may be imagined with what emotions Mr. St. Clair again looked on the countenance of Mary, as she sat by the fire opposite to her father. She was working at a frame, and as she leant over it, well did he remember how wondrously that profile had struck him when first he saw her in the little garden at Nice,—that garden whose memory was now as that of Paradise to him!

He started forward,—but his mother caught his arm, exclaiming in a terrified whisper: “For Heaven’s sake, do not show yourself now; you don’t know what you might bring upon that poor girl. Wait only a little while, and he will be gone to bed,—it is just his hour. Come this way, and we shall see when they move.”

“I must stay near,” he said. “I cannot lose one moment’s sight of her while I can have it. To-morrow—and I shall be far away again.”

“My dearest son! Why so soon?”

“My ship sails the day after. But see, she is moving.”

They watched her as she got up and went towards her father. She looked at him sadly as she waited at his side, and seemed to answer gently the angry words—to judge from his countenance—that he was addressing to her. With an impatient gesture he directed her to ring the bell, which she did; and in a moment the kindly face of Susan appeared at the door of the room. Mary put out her hand to help her father out of his chair, but he pushed her rudely away and took Susan’s arm instead, who turned however to give a cheering glance of respectful sympathy at her young mistress.

The poor girl staggered back a little with the roughness of the action; but recovering herself, she followed her father out of the room.

Mr. St. Clair, with sudden passion, turned and clasped his mother to his heart, as if to crush down the insufferable agony that raged there, at seeing this.

“Calm yourself, my dearest Wilfred,” she cried, her heart bleeding for him.

“I cannot endure it!” he exclaimed. “I never thought to have hated mortal man—especially one that belonged to her; but now I could trample that monster beneath my feet!”

“Oh, Wilfred! do not speak such words. Ask God rather to forgive him.”

“Yes!” he replied more calmly; “that were indeed more fitting. But to see him almost strike that angel creature!” And he walked away in agony uncontrollable.

Just then Susan re-entered the little apartment, and advancing to the window, she opened it, to close the outer shutters.

Mrs. St. Clair instantly going to the garden-gate, whispered the good girl's name.

She started with alarm.

"I am sorry I frightened you," said Mrs. St. Clair; "but I want you to ask Miss Sydney, when the General is in bed, if she can come to me for an hour or two; I will be out here waiting for her, and will bring her back again myself."

Much as General Sydney disliked the continual intercourse with Mrs. St. Clair, he had yet never forbidden it, and Mary was with her therefore whenever he did not require her to be at home, and occasionally also in the evening, after he had retired to rest. The invitation, therefore, on the present occasion was only extraordinary, as being given by Mrs. St. Clair at so late an hour, and Mary felt no hesitation in accepting it.

CHAPTER XL.

Never did I see in real life, or ever heard in tale or history, of any woman distinguished for intellect of the highest order, who was not also remarkable for this trustfulness of spirit, this happiness and cheerfulness of temper.—
MRS. JAMESON.

WHEN equipped for her walk, Mary left the house to join her friend. Her eye wandered on all sides in hope of seeing Mr. St. Clair; and as she advanced to meet Mrs. St. Clair, she could scarcely return her kindly greeting, so nervously anxious was she, and so bitterly disappointed at not seeing him.

Fearing to startle her, he had walked on a little way, but then turned to meet her. On perceiving him advancing in the moon's uncertain light, she pressed Mrs. St. Clair's arm inquiringly.

"Yes! my dear," answered that kind woman, "it is Wilfred; he arrived about an hour ago."

They met, but could not speak. In silence he gave her his arm, and in silence she took it; and they all walked together towards Mrs. St. Clair's house. Instead, however, of going in when they arrived there, Mr. St. Clair passed the door, with a little entreating gesture, and drew Mary on to walk along the gravel walk with him.

"I will call you in then, when the tea is ready," said Mrs. St. Clair.

The garden was not large, but much more so than General Sydney's; and there was a little shrubbery, and a lawn in front

of the house. There they walked; but for a time it seemed as if nothing could break the spell of silence that lay on them. Their hearts were so full, that no one word or thought could get precedence of the rest. At length Mary spoke.

"When must you return, Wilfred?"

"Soon, Mary—to-morrow."

She made no answer, she could not.

"It is a short visit," he continued, "yet better than none; to see you is such happiness! But now tell me, Mary, how you are, and all that has happened since I went away, for I have not received a line, you know, and my heart is on the rack."

"I have little to tell you, Wilfred. We came here about a month ago, and this house becoming vacant, your mother kindly took it; and she is such a comfort to me!"

"You are wanting comfort then,—and often, I fear. It is useless to try and deceive me, Mary, I know you are—you must be, unhappy."

"Sometimes I am, but not always, Wilfred; I have so many happy things to think of."

"But my mother tells me that that man is constantly coming down here, and harasses you to death."

"Yes, Wilfred, he does come very often, and his visits do harass me, for he is always pressing upon me that which is hateful to my very soul."

"It is inconceivable! for he knows of your engagement, perfectly."

"Yes! but he urges me, for my father's sake, to break it off, for he could do so much more, he says, for him, than you could."

"Mary! I must see him and end this at once."

"For God's sake—for my sake, Wilfred, I entreat you not. It must lead to a quarrel, and—oh! promise me—promise me you will not—Wilfred, promise me."

"But I cannot let it go on, Mary! I feel it an injury to my honour that another should dare speak so to my affianced wife."

"Oh! leave your honour in my keeping, Wilfred. Is it not safe?"

He pressed her hand to his heart, and could say no more.

"But your father, Mary," he began again, "he is surely too honourable to think of such a thing."

Mary was silent; her heart was filled with grief and shame on her father's account.

"Tell me all, I beseech you," continued Mr. St. Clair with somewhat of impatience; "my time is so short, and I must know everything, or I shall be miserable—more even than I am."

"Well then, Wilfred, he does urge it, and says—that our marriage was to depend on his consent—and that now he never will give it—and that it is my duty to marry Captain Normanton." She burst into tears.

Mr. St. Clair tried to soothe her, though his own heart felt ready to break. After a few minutes she was able to speak again.

"I can bear all this, Wilfred, for happily my wish and duty join in keeping my faith true to you, and never shall it be shaken. If we were even in deepest poverty I would beg for my father rather than marry another. It is a pleasure to me to work for him, and never yet has he wanted, I thank God! anything."

"You work for him, Mary?"

"Yes," she said, looking up at him, amused at the astonishment he showed; "why should I not? I have nothing else to do, and it is so delightful to have earned myself the means with which to get him the little things he wants and likes. I think it is that which most, of all outward things, helps to keep my spirit from sinking; it is such an object to labour for,—and the finishing a piece—and then getting my little earnings for it! Oh! if only he would be content and as he used to be, I should be happier than ever I was before—excepting one year."

He looked down upon her as the moonlight streamed on her face and even by that pale light he could see the bright flush which animated her countenance, as it glowed with the beauty of her feelings. He could but give that smile of tenderness, which is so nearly akin to tears, then said,—

"And what is the work you do, and how do you dispose of it?"

"Your mother gets it sold for me, and it is—besides drawings—that sort of Moresco-work of velvet and gold which you have so often admired, the same, you know, as that pocket-book I gave you at Nice—my first gift, Wilfred—and which you said you would never part from."

Mr. St. Clair drew it forth and showed it her, stained and discoloured as it was from the effect of the salt-water.

"This, with your picture and your ring, and one little book of the holy words of truth—also your gift, Mary—were all that I saved from the wreck; but they were worth all the rest to me!"

"And then they would bid me think you faithless," she exclaimed.

"Who would bid you think me faithless?" he demanded quickly.

She saw her inadvertency, and was silent.

"Tell me, Mary," he continued, "tell me what they have told you of my unfaithfulness. I need not ask who *they* mean,—I know that full well; but what have they said against me?"

"That you had been professing love to another," she replied in a low voice, "and that you had felt it."

"And you triumphed in your knowledge of the falsehood of the accusation?"

"Surely I did. And then such proof was brought, as might almost have staggered me had it been—almost—against myself—but it did not—could not—shake my confidence in you."

"Now God is good to me!" he exclaimed fervently. "I said I could trust your trust, and was I not right? . . . They told you—did they not—that I was found at the feet of that beautiful creature with whom I was staying? Was not that part of their report?"

"Yes; but I believed it no more than the rest."

"Then I find I must put your confidence more to the test than even my worst enemies have done, for what will you say if I myself tell you, Mary, that at the feet of that lovely creature—kneeling before her—they did find me?"

"I should say," she replied, raising her trusting eyes to his, "that he who could tell me so, loved me only, and trusted me, as my love to him deserved."

He was silent a moment, with the dizzy sense of excessive happiness.

"Can there be sorrow in the world?" he exclaimed at length. "It seems to me impossible just now."

"There is much of happiness, at least," she replied.

Yet there was a shade of sadness in her voice, which in an instant depressed the tone of Mr. St. Clair's feelings.

"Yes! there is happiness," he sighed; "but how a moment's thought changes the current of one's feelings! But I will explain what must seem odd in the circumstance I have mentioned."

"It needs not, Wilfred," she replied; "for though my curiosity might like to be gratified, yet I had rather you should feel that I trusted fully, without knowing or hearing."

"But to confute others it may be as well you should know, and therefore I will tell you. I had displeased Donna Mercedes, and, though sweet as yourself in general, she was haughty at times; and I, vexed at having offended her, threw myself on my knee before her, to beg her to forgive me. You can understand that—in Spain?"

"No, I cannot," she answered, looking up again with a playful smile; "I cannot the least understand your having either offended or knelt to her. But still that does not shake my confidence. How could you have offended her?"

"Shall I offend you now if I say that at this moment I had rather not tell you?"

"No," she replied; "I can only again say that confidence does not preclude secrets, it only makes us feel that all is right in those secrets. I am sure that you have good reasons for not wishing to tell me—and for all that you have done—and I am quite happy that you should not say a word more than you like."

"How can I love you enough," he exclaimed, "for your noble trust and tenderness! My life seems too brief and poor a thing to serve you in. But Mary, when Captain Normanton told you of these things—for it was him of course—what did you say?"

"I simply said, I did not believe them. He turned pale, as you know he does when angry, and talked of my 'wilful infatuation.'"

"And your father? Can he permit such language?"

"He falls into such deep abstractions, and sleeps so much of his time away, that he often does not know what passes; and this account of you he certainly did not hear. I do not think he ever encourages Captain Normanton himself, further than allowing him to be here, and I know he told him when he spoke to him on the subject, that there was some sort of engagement between us. So far that is a comfort and security. But when we are alone together, then it is that he calls me cruel; and—what is so hard to bear—says that you have done me all this harm, and made me selfish and undutiful." And her voice trembled as she spoke.

"This is not to be endured!" he exclaimed, "and must be ended. Has my mother no influence now? Your father used to have so much respect for her."

"No, he is completely subdued by Captain Normanton, who seems to have an evil power to influence and torment him; for my poor dear, dearest father is not happy, and that is worse to me than all. At times he will cry like a child, and call me again as he used to do, 'his own,' 'his beloved,' and ask me to forgive him; and yet perhaps at other times when I speak the love I feel, he will tell me that if I loved him in truth, I should not be so cruel to him. But I care not for his harsh words as I do for his tears and words of fondness. Then, I could almost wish I had never seen you, never loved you; though even then it would have killed me to have married Captain Normanton."

"Mary, I cannot let this continue," he exclaimed. "Even by this imperfect light I can see the ravages which these trials have made on your health. Your pale cheek, your thin hand, tell me how much you have suffered. And if it has been so in

this short time, what—what will it be when I am away for years? My mother living with you too no longer,—I can guess but too well why."

"Yes, my father left the house near Dover—that house where we had been so happy, that every grain of its dust was like golden sands to me—in order, I know, to separate me from her. And now my daily dread is that he should move away again, because she, in her kind love, came here to be with me. Oh! if I leave her quite, and you far away, Wilfred—I dread to think of it!"

"Mary!" he exclaimed, stopping and turning to her in violent agitation, "this shall not last. Listen to me,—I am urged by no selfish thought—but as you value your and my happiness, I entreat—I implore—I beseech you—consent to marry me before I go away again. I will set off for London now—instantly, and get the needed license, and shall be back again tomorrow, and we can be married here, in my mother's house. I shall have to leave you instantly after, but my mind will be at rest when you will no longer have to endure the persecutions of that man, and the cruelties of your father. Mary! you will consent to this?"

"I cannot, Wilfred, I cannot," she answered faintly—for the thought of being really his, and of being sheltered for ever from Captain Normanton's dreaded presence and from her father's persecutions, was too much of happiness to be rejected with firm heart and voice.

"Why not, Mary—why should you not? Your father would forgive you; and when he knew that importunity was vain, his mind too would be at rest; that man's oppressive influence would be over for ever, and he would be free again to love and bless his child."

"Do not tempt me, Wilfred—do not tempt me," she cried in extremity of distress, for there was a sore combat in her heart, and she felt its weakness; "do not ask me to do that—to do anything that I durst not avow before the face of day—before the eye of God."

"Mary! Mary!" he urged, "you shall avow it. From my mother's home we will go the moment you are mine, and kneel before your father, and he will forgive, and bless us. Mary! you will consent?"

"No, Wilfred," she said; "your last words have saved me from the weakness of my failing heart. You say my father will forgive, and bless us! Yes! he will bless us,—but never shall he have anything to forgive. Urge it no more, Wilfred. I see—I feel the love, the kindness which makes you wish it, but I cannot—cannot do it!"

"Mary! you distract me!" he exclaimed; "the thought of leaving you a prey to all this misery—this persecution, is death to me! Mother! dear mother!" for he saw Mrs. St. Clair coming towards them, "come and help me to persuade Mary to do what will be so much for her peace."

And he detailed rapidly to his mother his plan, and his reasons for its proposal.

Poor Mrs. St. Clair, whose timidity of disposition made it difficult for her to decide on the smallest affair, and whose gentleness could not bear opposing the least wish of those she loved, was in a state of utter terror and consternation when so serious a plan was opened before her, and her opinion, or rather sanction, asked. She looked bewildered from one to the other, every muscle of her countenance working with agitation. Her son fixed his eyes on her in breathless suspense, hoping that a favourable word from her might incline Mary to grant his wish; but not a word could Mrs. St. Clair speak. She saw, indeed, the advantages of the proposition, yet she could not like the idea of anything being done secretly. At last she almost unconsciously murmured something about "General Sydney."

"God is my witness!" exclaimed Mr. St. Clair, vehemently, "that did I not think that what I proposed would contribute to his comfort as well as Mary's, never would I urge it. But the matter once ended, he would soon be reconciled to it, and her love would again become the joy of his life."

"He would certainly be happier—if his mind were not so continually harassed,—" began Mrs. St. Clair again, in trembling accents.

"There, Mary!" exclaimed Mr. St. Clair, passionately, throwing himself on his knee before her, "my mother herself says that your father's happiness would be secured by it,—and not a moment would we delay telling him, when once it was done,—for, for worlds would I not have you live a life of deception,—you know I would not. I implore you, therefore—I beseech you, by all you love, to grant my request."

"Wilfred," she said, raising her hand so as to check his further speaking, "God says that 'One day is in His sight as a thousand years.' I dare not deceive for one day."

Then, overcome by the thought of the anguish which she knew her determination would give him, her heart melted within her, and, laying her hand gently on his shoulder, she murmured words of kindness, while her warm tears fell on his flushed and burning cheeks. He rose and held her to his heart a moment in silence; then hastily turned, and walked away.

What passed in the depths of his perturbed soul no eye could see, save His who was with him in the strife; but long and

stormy seemed the conflict. Those who loved him, watched—through their fast-falling tears—his unequal and agitated steps. He had thrown off his cap in the heat and energy of his remonstrances with Mary, and now he continually swept the waving hair from his brow as if it pressed with the weight of iron.

At length the grace of God conquered, and, humbled in heart, he acknowledged before his mighty, compassionate Judge the wrong he had done in seeking to turn the soul of her he loved for one moment from the path of open truth. He prayed—besought to be resigned, and to be enabled to trust her fate to God's safe and gracious keeping; and then calmed, but almost stunned under the effects of the violent emotions he had undergone, he advanced to rejoin her and his mother, and in sadness and silence they all returned to the house.

"Forgive me," he said, as Mary was following his mother in.

She turned to speak words of more than forgiveness, when her eye, scarcely resting an instant on his agitated countenance, caught sight of some one, half visible, half concealed by the shrubs, evidently watching them, just outside the railing. She grasped his arm with a faint exclamation of terror, and flew into the house. His eye followed the direction of hers, and he too saw the figure of a man, though then retreating.

He rushed towards the spot, but the shrubs were thick, and the garden making a turn there, any one could be hid from sight in a moment. He hastily snatched up his cap and hurried to the gate. He went out into the lane and field, and looked all round the house, but all trace of any one's having been there was gone. He felt strangely discomposed; yet who could it be? Probably only some countryman out late on business, attracted by curiosity at hearing their voices in the garden.

So he really thought, and so he tried to persuade the others when he went in to join them at their late tea; but though it seemed indeed the most likely that it should be so, yet Mary, in her own secret heart, did not think it. To her affrighted fancy, calm and self-possessed as she generally was, everything disquieting of late had connected itself with the thought of Captain Normanton; and spite almost of her reason,—for how or why should he be there, and at that unusual time of night?—she could not but *feel* that it was he. She was silent however as to her suspicions, for she did not like to trouble the minds of the others.

A short time spent in sad but sweet intercourse, and Mrs. St. Clair said she feared it was time for Mary to return. They set out therefore, and walked slowly back again, wishing to linger out the moments.

"When next I walk with you, dear mother," said Mr. St.

Clair, as they drew near General Sydney's house, "I trust I shall have an arm to offer you both."

Mary leant back her head to look at his mother, whom she then remembered must be walking without support, and was on the point of begging her to come to that side and take her son's arm, when again she saw the same figure as she had seen before, standing in the deep shade of a large yew, a little way out on the common which skirted the road where they were walking. With great presence of mind she restrained the cry of fear which rose to her lips, as now, without a possibility of doubt, she recognized the tall stature and figure of Captain Normanton; and saying not a word to her companions, she only involuntarily quickened her pace, though her whole frame shook with terror, and her heart beat with that dreadful pulsation which seems to threaten life itself. Mr. St. Clair felt the shaking of her hand as it rested on his arm, and turned to her, saying:

"You tremble, Mary; are you tired?"

"No," she replied in a whisper, pointing to the house, as if eager to get there.

He thought the action and the lowering of the voice meant for them not to speak loud as they drew near for fear of disturbing General Sydney; so in a corresponding whisper he asked her when he could see her the next day, and where.

"I will be at your mother's at eight," she replied. "My father never gets up now till near twelve, and Susan will let me know when he wakes."

"I should wish to see him before I go, Mary. My mother says he will be displeased at my being here, but now, like you, I desire to have no concealments; I never did but that once, and for that you have forgiven me."

No word was needed in answer, but as they approached the garden, she said:

"I will stay at this gate till you are quite out of sight; so look back and wave your handkerchiefs."

They took leave, Mr. St. Clair with natural sadness, but Mary with a sense of soul-sickening fear that was almost insupportable. Yet had she been asked what it was she feared, she would have found it difficult to have said; but the agitations of that evening, and the influence of that still and solemn hour, when not a sound was heard, and the moon's cold light lay on a sea of mist which enshrouded the whole earth, save where the tall trees rose here and there like dark islets out of it, and cast their black shadows around, seemed to have shaken her naturally strong mind, and to have opened it to the admission of every sad and fearful idea. At other times she would as soon have believed herself capable of deeds of violence as Captain Normanton, much

as she dreaded him in other ways; but now the circumstance of his being there at that unusual hour, and of his lurking concealed about their paths and homes, added to the jealousy which she knew would be swelling his proud and sensitive heart even to frenzy, filled her with the most frightful alarms. She dreaded the encounter of these two fiery spirits, should they meet; for though she knew that Mr. St. Clair's high principles would ever prevent his seeking a quarrel, or wishing to avenge it by the murderous sin of duelling, and though he had promised her not himself to speak, yet she could not say, with his deep injuries, how far his wounded and goaded spirit might be enabled to maintain its calm under further irritation.

The little arrangement therefore that she had made about remaining at the gate, had a motive far deeper than the mere protracted remembrance of a few minutes. She hoped by it to keep her friends' attention on herself, so as to make it less likely that they should observe the enemy who was lurking near; and she hoped also to keep a power over that enemy himself, for she felt confident that he was aware that she had seen and recognized him, and he must know that it would be impossible for him to leave the shadow of that insulated tree without her seeing him as long as she remained where she was. A consciousness too of his most unhappy love for herself, made her think that, should he be induced to leave his covert, his first impulse would be to speak to her, rather than follow her friends for any purpose of insult or revenge.

She remained therefore at the gate, watching with intense anxiety the steps of her friends; and often did they look back and give the promised sign of remembrance. With a palpitating heart she saw them safely pass the fearful tree, and then she breathed more freely; yet could she not be satisfied to leave her post till they had disappeared beyond the turning in the road, and till sufficient time had elapsed for them to have safely reached their home.

She was then about to turn and enter the house, when, with a shiver of terror, which, though she had fully expected to see him, yet she could not control, she saw Captain Normanton's dark figure emerge into the moonlight, and come onward in her direction. In an instant she flew into the house; and when in her own room, having no light, she seated herself within the dark shadow of the wall, thankful for the rest to her trembling limbs, and watching what should be the end to this strange and disquieting night-visit.

Slowly did the object of her alarm advance, and had she doubted before of his identity, that doubt would have been then dispelled; for walking up to the palings, and leaning indeed for

some minutes over the very garden-gate where she herself had so lately been standing, she distinctly saw the man whom most on earth she dreaded.

She sat as if frozen to the place; she knew indeed that he could not dream of calling at that late hour, yet still he was there, and spell-bound—incapable of moving, almost of breathing, she felt a weight of terror quite unspeakable.

And yet, through all those tremors, the effect as we have said, rather of the excited state of her nerves than of any rational fears—spite too of all the real cause that she had for dreading him, there stole over her, as she saw him there,

“Unblest, while at the threshold of her bower,
An unaccounted guest, he took his stand—”

a feeling of such compassion as made the tears burst from her eyes.

After a time he left the gate, and with evident reluctance retraced his steps. He turned, and stopped, and turned again, as if he could not tear himself away; when suddenly another figure appeared in the road, advancing to meet him.

They met, stopped, and from their vehement gestures were evidently conversing in no amicable mood; then suddenly with rapid steps they turned together down the road that led to Hastings.

“My God!” exclaimed Mary, sinking on her knees and extending her straining arms to Heaven, “save—save—save them from blood—from murder!”

Then instantly starting up, she stole rapidly and silently into her maid's room. She found her still up.

“Susan,” she said, in a hushed whisper, “follow me instantly down the cross path that leads to the road there.”

“Good Heavens, Miss Sydney!” exclaimed the girl, alarmed at this order and at her young mistress's pale and horrified appearance; “what is the matter?”

“I cannot tell you now, but follow me quickly.” And she left the room, and gliding noiselessly down the stairs, undid the back door, which opened on the path she had named, and which led, at about the distance of half a mile, into the Hastings road. Like lightning she flew along it, urged to greater speed by hearing, as she got nearer them, the voice of Captain Normanton in tones of vehement irritation, most unusual to him. She reached the gate that opened to the road, just before they came up to it. She paused, leaning on it to support her shaking limbs and recover her agonized breathing from having run so fast. They drew near, when the exciting tone in which Captain Normanton was still speaking brought his very words to her ear.

"I have her father's sanction, and shall not therefore think it needful to ask yours, Mr. Bruce."

Bruce ! Mr. Bruce ! Was it then he, and not Mr. St. Clair, who was there ?

She had just time to recollect herself, and to step aside into the shade of the dark hedge-row, when they passed ; but yet her terror at seeing Captain Normanton so close to her, nearly made her sink. She felt bewildered, as if in some horrible, baffling dream.

Mr. Bruce ! could it be he ? how came he there ? (for amid the many interests that had occupied his mind that night, Mr. St. Clair had forgotten to mention that he had come with him to Hastings), and why was he too wandering about in those quiet places at that hour of the night ?

Every other thought, however, gave way to the overpowering one of joy, at finding it was not Mr. St. Clair who was with Captain Normanton,—that there was no danger for him ; and throwing her arms round Susan's neck, whose breathless haste had just brought her to her side, she burst into a passion of wild, almost delirious tears.

The poor maid, terrified out of her senses, besought her to be tranquil, covering her head over with her own shawl in hopes of deadening the sound of her convulsive sobs. At length she became more quiet, but still continued for some minutes straining Susan to her heart, and sobbing forth almost frantically her inarticulate thanks to God. Then turning and taking the girl's arm, she began slowly to retrace her steps homewards—slowly and wearily, for she was exhausted, body and mind.

"Ask me nothing now, dear Susan," she said, as she reached the house, "only thank God for His kindness to me. To-morrow I will tell you all."

Then in the stillness of her own room, she thought of all that had occurred. Her joy was indeed great at the removal of her worst fears ; yet when this feeling had a little subsided, the words she had heard Captain Normanton speak, began to fill her with alarm and terrible forebodings. She was but too well aware that her father favoured his wishes, but that he should have so avowedly sanctioned them, as for Captain Normanton to feel justified in announcing that sanction to another, filled her with dismay.

She felt most miserable ! But then the blest recollection of God's unceasing care and love came down like balm upon her heart. She felt anew "in whom she believed," and knew that she had His promise never to leave her nor forsake, and to Him she committed everything !

"Not as man sees, seeth God !—
Not as man loves, loveth He !"

No! His love—who can tell? drawn forth from the depths of His eternal heart!

She rested on it, and was still! And then over her calmed spirit was brought too the soothing light of holy earthly affections.

She thought of the joy which the next day's dawn would bring her, of that presence which had been so long withheld; and as she gently sank to rest she murmured to herself over and over again the blessed word—"To-morrow, to-morrow, to-morrow!"

CHAPTER XLI.

November! yet the sun beams bright and soft!—

November! yet the air inspires a balm!

While the few fleecy clouds that float aloft,

Affect the semblance of a spring-like calm.

But prostrate nature irresponsible lies;

Feels not the glow—nor heeds the zephyr's call;

The radiance shows but where the flow'et dies,—

The breeze but speeds the sear leaf to its fall.

Thus, in the griefs of life,—some fleeting hour

A transient ray of joy may chance to gild;

But vain to prompt one bud of hope its power,

Or warm a breast by mortal sorrow chill'd.

H. L. L.

THE morrow came, soft, still, and dewy; with a mist so light, that even the feeble beams of a November sun were able soon to disperse it, and spread brightness and warmth around.

Not so with the cloud that lay that morning on Captain Normanton's tortured heart. Heavy, too heavy was it for mortal strength to lift, and unhappily he had never made proof of the Immortal arm.

Ah! could he once have roused himself to grapple with the dreadful feeling which was one continued torture to his soul, how much of guilt, how much of misery might have been saved!

Yet there was much to be esteemed in his character. He had a deep reverence for religion, though no real acquaintance with it, a high devotional idea of God, but alas! no intercourse with Him. Therefore his soul was sterile, and his stern heart, though stained by no degrading vice, was untempered by the dewy influences and genial teachings of the Holy Spirit. Neither had he any earthly friend who could be of use to him, for the general harshness of his disposition had prevented his forming those

cordial ties which are in general such softeners of the human character. The only being to whom he was really attached, excepting Mary Sydney, was his sister, Lady Davenport; but her character partaking of all his defects, but sharing few of his finer qualities, was calculated to injure rather than improve his tone of mind.

Mr. Bruce was the only person who had ever spoken to him on the subject of his conduct as regarded Mary Sydney; but—besides that he was much younger than himself, and could not therefore be supposed to have much weight with him—his harsh way of speaking was calculated to do more harm than good. Had he shown him more respect, and endeavoured to touch and soften, instead of wounding and irritating his quick feelings, he might have been blest to a great and good purpose as regarded him; but giving way to that harshness, which was ever the shady side of his otherwise fine character, he closed up every avenue by which better feelings might have reached and benefited his heart.

Even Mary herself, with all her sweetness, did not well understand him—though considering her youth and little experience of the world, that was not much to be wondered at. Courageous to the utmost where any principle was concerned, yet was she timid as a fawn with her fellow-creatures; and though in much of her disposition, in its warm enthusiasm, and quick, most tender, most ardent feelings, she showed that the blood of Italy flowed in her veins, yet, in shrinking reserve, burying deep her joys within her heart, and silently “folding the robe o’er secret pain,” she partook much of the character of her father’s land; and checked as she had always been by him in all expression of her feelings, she had learnt in general to be timid in speaking of them to others.

But for that, she might in all simplicity and singleness of heart, have spoken to Captain Normanton, and have told him of the grief he caused her, while her natural sorrow for his pain might have freely been expressed. She might have thrown herself upon his generosity, imploring him to plead her cause with her father, instead of being himself the obstacle to her happiness; and by rousing all the nobler qualities of his mind, have shown him that there was something better to live for than the mere vanishing things of time—something more worthy the energies of a high nature—than the ruthless gratification of mere selfish feeling.

But now it seemed impossible! Not that her innocent and lovely nature was prone to think harm of others, but that any evil that she could not help perceiving terrified her, and made her tremblingly retire within the fastnesses of her own pure

heart. No one would naturally have been more open, more outpouring in their nature; but her father had never been one, with all his love for her, who had courted, or permitted even, the confidence which would else have made her thoughts "run out before him as a summer rill;" and by wayward caprice and harsh expressions had constantly repelled her feelings, till she had been forced to hush them back again to the deep stillness of a "sealed fountain."

It was indeed the perfect confidence which she had felt in Mr. St. Clair which had made her love for him spring up so readily in answer to that he had felt for her. She read in the depths of his speaking eye a tenderness that could never repel—a kindness that could never rebuke—a love that could never fail!

He it was, in fact, who better than any other understood Captain Normanton's true nature, and who alone gave him full credit for his many good qualities; and had he but been in a situation quietly to have spoken to him before his bitter wrongs had raised an almost insuperable barrier between them, he might perhaps have "gained his brother." But at first he was under his command on board ship, and dared not speak to him, and since that no occasion had presented itself of his being able to do so quietly; and, indeed, Captain Normanton's manner to him had ever been so offensive, that it would have required an endurance and kindness beyond even his to have borne with it without letting irritation arise in his mind, or displeasure show itself in his manner.

Heavy, we have said, was the cloud that lay on Captain Normanton's spirits that morning, after his wretched night's walk to Hollington. He had been in Portsmouth at the time of Mr. St. Clair's arrival from Spain, and had heard of his setting off instantly with Mr. Bruce "to go and see his mother." He knew full well what else that hasty journey would accomplish for him, and to follow him was, therefore, the first impulse of his mind—and unfortunately he gave way to it.

What object he proposed to himself in so going, it would have been difficult to say; it seemed more an outbreak of his jealous spirit than any settled purpose,—more the irritable necessity of doing something, than the knowing what to do.

Arrived at the hotel at Hastings, where Mr. Bruce had alighted some hours before, he hardly allowed himself time to take any refreshment before he was on the road to Hollington. When he reached it, late as it was, he went to General Sydney's house, but, to his infinite mortification, found that the old

man had already retired for the night, and that Mary was at Mrs. St. Clair's.

Baffled and desperate, he followed her there, though without having for a moment the temerity to think of calling ; but as he was approaching the house, he heard voices in the garden, and caught glimpses of figures, as they came out occasionally from the shelter of the trees into the clear, still moonlight.

Amid the most turbulent tumult of feeling, however, never could a dishonourable action have presented itself to his mind ; and rather than have approached near enough to have overheard one word that was not intended for his ear, he would have fled for ever from the spot.

Irresistibly, however, was he impelled to seek a nearer view of her—the most indistinct fluttering of whose ribbons, or sound of whose voice, would have been sufficient to have lured him to the brink of destruction—aye ! or down its fatal steep ; and, vaulting over the paling of a little field which ran under the garden fence, he placed himself so that he could see those who were walking there, without being himself observed.

He was thus distantly present when Mr. St. Clair was pressing Mary Sydney to consent to their hasty marriage ; and though it was impossible for him to feel certain as to the subject of the earnest importunity he witnessed, yet he could not but have a suspicion of its nature, and the bare idea of it filled him with torture and alarm. Yet he could not tear himself from the spot as long as Mary remained there ; and in his earnest watching it was that he incautiously betrayed himself to her sight. Forced then to go, he stationed himself beneath the tree on the common, knowing that from thence he must catch another glimpse of her on her way home ; and when she had passed, he could not deny himself the wretched consolation of leaning a moment on the gate by which she had stood, and gazing at the dwelling which contained her.

These softened feelings however, had been rudely chased, and his mind ruffled to the highest degree, by his meeting with Mr. Bruce ; the rugged home-truths which that honest heart had, too strongly, perhaps, laid before him, having sunk deep into his spirit.

Mr. Bruce had just returned from his solitary ramble the evening before, when he saw his chaise drive rapidly up to the hotel. He thought he distinguished his figure as he hastily alighted, and, inquiring of the waiter, found it was he—that official gratuitously adding, “that he had had rooms there for the last month, and that he was the civilest and most liberal gentleman that had ever entered their doors.”

This was anything but welcome news to Mr. Bruce, who

wished with all his heart that the Captain would exercise his civilities and liberalities anywhere but in that particular spot; and hearing him soon after go down stairs and leave the house, and determining that he should not have the world that night all to himself, he rushed after him, hoping to overtake him, and prevent his disturbing the happiness of his friends. Being less, however, "*en pays de connaissance*" than the other, he made sundry wrong turns, and lost sight of him completely, till at last he had the fierce encounter with him on the common which so alarmed poor Mary Sydney. Determined then, not to leave him, he turned back with him to Hastings; and not affecting to be ignorant of his motive for visiting that part of the country at that moment, he openly expressed his hope that he would refrain from disturbing Mr. St. Clair in the few hours of enjoyment that were left him before he quitted England for so long a time. This abrupt and galling appeal it was which brought forth from Captain Normanton the assertion of his possessing General Sydney's sanction for his addresses to his daughter, which had met Mary's alarmed ear, and which filled him also with astonishment and indignation. That the weak old man should permit them, he had always thought probable; but that he should sanction them after having given his full consent to her engagement to another, seemed almost beyond belief. That Captain Normanton also could avail himself of so unprincipled a permission, seemed incomprehensible; and his opinions on the subject he stated without the smallest attempt at disguise.

After the first moments of irritation, Captain Normanton received what he said with that sort of contemptuous patience which a person who does not intend to be drawn into a quarrel, or to alter a single line of his course, can sometimes assume; and arrived at the hotel, he wished his companion "good night," with a light good humour which made the other, who was fretted "to the top of his bent," be "conscious of a strong desire to precipitate him over the banisters."

CHAPTER XLII.

When first thine eyes unveil, give thy soul leave
 To do the like ; our bodies but forerun
 The spirit's duty. True hearts spread, and heave
 Unto their God, as flowers do to the sun.
 Give Him thy first thoughts then, so shalt thou keep
 Him company all day, and in Him sleep.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

To Mary and Mr. St. Clair that dewy morning rose with happiness unspeakable. Vain all the troubles of the past!—vain all the clouds that hung over the future!—there was a sunny space between, and on that only could their minds rest. How long it seemed since they had been able to say on waking, “To-day we shall meet!” and beyond that universe—“meeting!”—where could their hearts go? From their respective chambers their first thoughts had arisen in joyous gratitude to God; and before the sun's rays had cleared the mists away from their path, they were forth to meet each other.

“Send for me, Susan, the moment my father wakes,” said Mary, as her attendant stood rather perplexed at the difference which her young lady's radiant looks at that moment presented to the mysterious agony of the past night.

“You are going out, Miss Sydney?” was the interrogatory reply.

“Yes, Susan, I am going to breakfast at Mrs. St. Clair's. Mr. St. Clair is there to-day.”

“I thought so,” replied Susan, with delight. “But, dear Miss Sydney, what terrible grief you were in last night!”

“I was, Susan; and I'll tell you all about it another time; but now I cannot think of griefs!” And she finished tying the fresh rose-coloured ribbons of her bonnet, and putting her arm round Susan's neck, gave her the loving kiss of girlhood's happiness, and ran down stairs.

As she went through the little garden, the exquisite scent of one of the “*roses des quatre saisons*,” which was still blooming there, was wafted past her by the light wind, which

“— brushing by with joyous wing
 Wakened each little leaf to sing.”

She gathered it for Mr. St. Clair, clearing away from it as she walked to meet him, the mass of withered petals and small

unfolded buds which crowded round it and spoilt its beauty; and she was still trimming and arranging it—herself

*“Più fresca, e più vezzosa,
Di matutina rosa,”*

*(More fresh and more lovely
Than the morning rose,)*

when he came up.

“Why are you tearing it to pieces?” he asked, after a moment.

“I am only making it beautiful,” she replied—“taking away the faded leaves and the small buds which the cold winds would have blighted.”

He took it, and looked at her with a smile.

“Think not of the grievous past—dread not the uncertain future—but enjoy the present blessed hour!’ Is it not that,” he said, “which, in the beautiful language of flowers, you wish anew to teach me?—a lesson which has already been of such happy use to me.”

They walked on, and strolled about Mrs. St. Clair’s garden till breakfast was ready; and then, when the urn was there with its steam eddying up to the ceiling, and all the other pleasant little preparations were made, they went in to that cheerful meal,—the sun shining in at the window, as if glad to make one among such happy beings.

There, too, would we gladly linger, resting awhile amid the bright and joyous things of life, before its heavy clouds come on to mar the prospect.

“The veil that covers futurity,” says the Turkish proverb, “is woven by the hand of mercy.”

Most merciful! it is indeed thy hand that has spread it before our eyes—

*“Hiding from us futurity,
Unveiling all the past to guide us,”*

and then as life’s sorrows fall sadly one by one upon the heart, He who in all His people’s afflictions is afflicted, sustains them with His strong arm and sympathising love, and “whispers to the else o’erfraught heart:” “It is I, be not afraid.”

From those, however, who write the records of the past, this happy boon of ignorance is withheld. They know the things which are advancing to their issues—can see the devastating clouds on-coming, even through the bright glancing of the sun-

shine; and hear how, above the "harpings of the peaceful gale,"

"sighs the sad genius of the coming storm."

But bright and sunny was that room, just then; where happiness looked upon happiness, and "hearts were of each other sure."

When breakfast was over, the party adjourned to the little drawing-room; where many of Mary's "*piccoli oggetti*," for which she had not space in her own diminutive cottage, adorned the tables and bookcases. Mr. St. Clair delightedly recognised them as having been in her morning-room in the old house; and talking of them led on to the recalling of many of those golden hours, whose brightness—appreciated as it had well been while passing—yet now coming back with "many a thought of recollected kindness," brought a double joy to his heart.

To the garden then they went, where November's few choristers held festival in the sun's unwonted rays—enjoying the pleasant "*été de Saint Martin*" (St. Martin's summer)—which lingers out real summer so delightfully! Every dead leaf was carefully removed from the well-kept spot, so that the silver dew lay unbroken on the lawn.

At length the passing bell of their present happiness tolled, and word was brought that General Sydney was awake.

"You will both come with me," said Mary; all the bright joyousness gone from her countenance.

"Do you think he would like it?" asked Mrs. St. Clair anxiously.

"Not at first perhaps; but he must be told of Wilfred's being here, and he ought to see him. I must still act on the presumption that he regards him as he did before, or I should seem to acquiesce in his changed views. He will have the opportunity, too, of speaking to Wilfred about them, if he wish it; though if he should, you both know, that—with all duty I say it—his words are not mine, and never can be."

"That assurance was not needed, my dear," said Mrs. St. Clair much affected; "we both know you too well to doubt you. But if you really think Wilfred had better go, he shall; but I think you had best prepare your father first."

"Oh no! indeed not," said Mary eagerly; "he might refuse to see him, and it is much better they should meet! Oh! do come with me now."

"You will not want me, I think," urged Mrs. St. Clair, for she was terrified at the idea of braving General Sydney's anger.

"Oh! yes," replied Mary, as she kissed her entreatingly.

"you will come with us ; my father is always so gentle with you."

So she went up to put on her things.

"Wilfred," said Mary tremulously, when they were alone, "Captain Normanton is at Hastings. I saw him last night, and Mr. Bruce also ; you had not told me he was here."

And she related the meeting she had witnessed between them, and what she had heard Captain Normanton say ; and described also her own rapid flight through the fields,—laughing at the latter, as her terrors now seemed to her so ridiculous. To Mr. St. Clair, however, they seemed anything but that, for he grieved for what she had suffered on his account, though he assured her she need never entertain the same fears again. He was most indignant and uneasy also at finding that General Sydney could so openly sanction Captain Normanton's pretensions ; and dreaded more than ever the persecutions to which she might be subjected during his absence.

Mrs. St. Clair had also much disturbed him the day before, by what she had said of Captain Normanton's sister, Lady Davenport. She had, it seemed, been down to Hastings several times with her brother ; and had come over frequently to see the Sydneys, where Mrs. St. Clair had met her. She seemed, she said, a thoroughly worldly woman, with a manner, which though ladylike, was also very dictatorial and unpleasant.

"It irritated me beyond measure," continued even that gentle woman, "to hear the way in which she talked to General Sydney, for it was all so evidently done to make him think she was devoted to his happiness ; while her air of protection to Mary was most unpleasant,—speaking to her as if she were a child who needed her instruction."

This account recurred to Mr. St. Clair's mind when Mary began talking again of Captain Normanton, and he asked her why she had not mentioned Lady Davenport's visits to him.

She replied that she did not wish to tell him anything that would needlessly vex him, and she begged him not to be unhappy about it, for that she felt sure that God would protect her through any trial and difficulty that might occur, and make them happy together at last.

"And that is worth waiting for, Wilfred," she said.

Mr. St. Clair sat in gloomy thought for some moments.

"Mary," he said at length, "I grieve from my soul for having endeavoured yesterday to lead you one step aside from the open path of duty, and not for worlds would I do so again. But listen now I beseech you, to my request—my entreaty ! I cannot bear the thought of leaving you a prey to all these people.

Bruce will ever be ready for any service you may require, but what can he do in cases of this sort? My mother you may be separated from, and how can you endure, month after month, alas! perhaps, year after year, this harassing, oppressive state of existence! Did not I see you yesterday—yes, Mary, my mother and I saw you,—stagger under your father's hand—and God alone knows the insupportable agony I felt! And these people will tyrannize over you, and crush even your high courageous spirit—gentle and shrinking as it also is—still strength and life may fail. Mary, dearest, dearest Mary! let me then, in all honour and openness, entreat your father to consent to our marriage before I go,—there is yet time. Mary, you will not refuse me this?"

"No, Wilfred, I will not, if it will make you happier; but I do not think there will be any chance of success with my father. We know, alas, alas! too well, the reasons which make us wish it so earnestly, but they cannot be pleaded to him, and apart from them, what can you urge?"

"Oh! I have many, many things I could urge, Mary, which might, with the blessing of God, prevail. Then you will consent?"

"Yes, to anything you wish that is not wrong. With God's blessing, as you say, it may succeed; but, if it should not—promise me, dear Wilfred, to be calm, and to ask that you may feel, that it is refused because the blessing of God could not go with it."

He thanked her a thousand times, and a thousand cheering hopes animated his heart.

Mrs. St. Clair then joining them, they set out on their walk, and Wilfred told her of the projected appeal, begging her to add her arguments and entreaties to theirs, which she readily promised.

They walked on fast, fearful of General Sydney's being dressed before Mary was ready to receive him, as that would have been a grievous offence!

As they drew near the house, terrible tremors took possession of Mary's mind at the anticipation of her father's anger, both at Mr. St. Clair's appearance, and at the request she had consented he should make.

"Yet after all," she thought, "why should it trouble me so much? It is but man's displeasure—my real peace cannot be shaken by it!" And asking strength, she followed Mrs. St. Clair through the garden gate. Then stopping for a moment, she said to Mr. St. Clair,—

"If we have not another quiet moment to speak together, take these as my last words, Wilfred: nothing shall move my steadfast faith in you, or my steadfast faith towards you—

nothing—ever.” And she hastened after Mrs. St. Clair into the house.

“Will you stay here a few minutes?” she said, as she left them in the little sitting-room; “I will go and see if my father is ready to come down, and will tell him you are here.”

She was just going to knock at her father's door, when he opened it and appeared all dressed and ready to go down; he seemed in unusually good humour and spirits.

“What, out so early?” he exclaimed, seeing her with bonnet and pelisse on. And taking her arm he began to descend the little flight of stairs. “Well, it is a lovely day!”

“Yes, my father,” and she tried to still her agitation and tremulousness of voice, “I have been to Mrs. St. Clair's. Wilfred came back last night, and goes again to-day; and he is come here to see you.”

“Here? to see me?” exclaimed the old man in a tremor of fright and rage. “I won't see him—I can't see him—I won't see him.” And he struggled to free himself and turn back upstairs again.

But Mary gently but firmly retained his arm in hers; and as they were close to the drawing-room door, she opened it, and retreat was impossible. He was too well-bred to turn his back on Mrs. St. Clair or her son, when he saw them, so was constrained to go into the room; and their kindly greeting—for they really felt—Mr. St. Clair especially—pleased to see him—soon melted away his displeasure, and in his turn he really began to feel pleased to see them.

“Well!” he said, after a little while, looking around him with his old kindly twinkle of the eye, “this looks really like the old times, when somehow things were pleasanter than now; for you see,” turning to Wilfred, “this miserable place is not like the other—nothing is like it, I think.”

“Oh! better days will come,” said Mr. St. Clair, whose heart began to beat high with hope, as he saw how the old man had warmed towards him—“when I come back, I hope we may get that home again, and all live happily together there once more, for you will then have given your daughter to me, you know, dear sir, and she is never to leave you, or you her.”

“Ah! well, well! we shall see about that,” said the General, his countenance clouding a little, and his eye wandering about restlessly, “we shall see all about that when the time comes,—there's no saying what may have happened before that.”

“Yes, that is true,” said Mr. St. Clair; “and it is partly that uncertainty in life, my dear sir, which emboldens me to speak of something that is very near my heart—and that is—it would—would make me the happiest creature alive, if you could and would consent to give Mary to me—before I left England.”

"Before you left England? Why, Mary! you told me he was going away to-day."

"Yes, dear father, his ship sails to-morrow."

"Marry, before you go? Why what the—what the plague do you mean by that? Marry before you go? what? and carry her off among your blackamoors, and slaves, and pirates? Eh?"

"No, my dear sir," replied Mr. St. Clair, smiling, though angry, "I had no such thought; I only wished—"

"And you?" interrupted the old man, seizing his daughter by the wrist till her colour-started with the pain, "you are for going off too, and leaving your old father to die as he may—are you? Off without a minute's notice too! And this is what you are come here for, is it, Mr. St. Clair?"

Mr. St. Clair was too angry to dare trust himself to speak; and he felt too, now that it had come to the point, how right Mary had been, when she said that though they had reasons enough to desire the hasty marriage, yet that, without avowing those reasons, there was but little to be advanced in favour of it.

All were silent for a moment—the General glaring from face to face with the look of a tiger in a state of uncertainty as to which victim he should spring on first. At length the extremity of the case roused the kindly courage in Mrs. St. Clair's breast, and she began in a gentle tone,—

"I think, dear sir, you have mistaken my son's meaning, and Mary's too; they—"

"Very likely, very likely, my dear madam," interrupted the old man, trembling with rage, though trying to bring his temper down to somewhat of the level of courtesy, "I'm a stupid old fellow, I've no doubt—a dull old fool—who can't understand what is said to him! However, I am ready to listen to any explanation." And he continued making little bows of wrathful civility.

"I was saying," continued the mother, "that perhaps you had not quite—that Wilfred had not explained himself clearly. He only thought that it might be best, if they could have been just married before he went—"

"To-day, madam? this moment?"

"Before he went," repeated Mrs. St. Clair, with unruffled sweetness, though shrinking from saying "To-day," as it really did sound an unreasonable proposition when put into bare unexplained words. "His motive—or at least one great advantage of it would be, that while your daughter remained all the same with you—for no power would ever induce her to leave you—she might yet, should anything happen to us, have the protection of his name, even while he might still be away; while, should he live to return, he might then instantly offer her a home."

"Humph!" ejaculated the old General; "there is something in that, to be sure! But in plain language, you mean to say, my dear madam, that I am a crazy old fellow, with a crazy old body that may come to pieces any day; and that, therefore, it would be as well for her to have a home ready for her when I am gone—eh?"

"You have put it in rather strange words," replied Mrs. St. Clair, smiling; "but it was the uncertainty of life which I did allude to—though not only as regarded you, my dear sir, but myself—for while I lived your child could never want a home or a heart to receive her." She paused with an emotion which communicated itself to the others also, but soon clearing her voice, she proceeded,—

"If it did, therefore, please the God who gave our lives to take them during Wilfred's absence, your daughter would indeed be without a friend whom she could apply to in England, as you have always hitherto declined the many invitations you have received to visit the members of your own family and your former acquaintances."

"True, my dear madam, true; but I do not see how her being married would, during her husband's absence abroad, give her more of a home than if she were unmarried."

"Not more of a home, but you must, I think, dear sir, see that her position would be greatly altered. As a young wife, she could with all dignity and propriety go out to join her husband, should his ship be ordered to any place that would make a residence in the neighbourhood agreeable; or she might live quietly at home with your faithful Susan, in a house of her own. But as an unmarried girl, how could she do either?"

"Your argument is doubtless very good, my dear madam," said the General with a sarcastic smile; "and I see a great deal of reason in what you say, should we both drop into the grave on purpose to justify its acuteness. But whatever you mean to do, I have no intention whatever of ceasing to trouble the world so soon; and I prefer, therefore, keeping my daughter safely here, nursing her stupid old father, to running the chance of her receiving a letter some day to say that some yellow fever, or black negro, or something, had got hold of her husband, and that she, as a dutiful wife, must set out 'instantly' to take care of him. No, no, she's much better *where* she is, and *as* she is."

"I would never ask such a thing of her, sir," exclaimed Mr. St. Clair. "Her own promise was given, when first you gave your most *full* consent to our engagement, that she never would leave you, and through my means, never shall she do so—so may God help me!"

He laid a strong and most unmistakable emphasis upon some of his words, which thrilled through General Sydney's "very bones and marrow." He looked guiltily and stealthily from Mr. St. Clair's face to that of his mother to see if any suspicion lurked in either; but towards his daughter he dared not even turn a glance. He tried to cover his confusion, however, by assuming a light air, and said with stinging bitterness,—

"Well, all that's very fine, I dare say; but suppose I were the old fool you want to make me, have you, I beg,—all 'made ready, and prepared,' and only wanting my word to 'fire?' Or is his Majesty's service to be at a stand-still, and the winds expected to hold their breaths till your affairs, my young sir, are all arranged to your liking, and then for you to go down in triumph,—drums beating, flags flying, yards manned!"

Mr. St. Clair started up, exasperated beyond endurance.

"No, sir," he exclaimed; "I never had but one triumph, and I never wish for more: when I had—" He turned away, and walked to the window, disdaining to remind the old man of his obligations to him.

Mary, regardless of her father's presence, sprang to him, and in the bitterness of her feelings, burst into tears. Mrs. St. Clair joined them, leaving the old man alone to his reflections.

They were not of the pleasantest kind, for, irritable and desperately selfish as he was, he felt instantly ashamed of the unworthy words which he had just uttered; and the remembrance of the time to which Mr. St. Clair had alluded, and of the deep debt of gratitude he had then incurred to him,—so basely repaid!—all combined to humble and soften him; and, distressed at the sorrow he had occasioned, he said in an humble, penitent tone,—

"Well, Wilfred! come here, and give me your hand; I'm sorry for having spoken so contemptuously, for I do truly owe you more,—much more than life itself."

Mr. St. Clair with regret resigned Mary to his mother's care, and walked proudly and coldly up to General Sydney. He took the old man's extended hand, but could not find it in his heart to press it. He was in agony at the thought of leaving Mary to such keeping, and could not at that moment look upon her oppressor with any feeling short of abhorrence. He remained silent.

"You didn't use to be vindictive, Wilfred," said the General, meekly, "and should excuse an old man's petulance now and then—and not retain——"

"Oh, sir!" said Mr. St. Clair, agitatedly, and shaking his head as if he wished to rid himself of some intolerable thought, "I am not thinking of your words to me—they are beneath my

notice ; but I do think, and with torture too, of leaving——” He stopped—his breast heaving with the sea of turbulent sorrows and apprehensions which swelled within it.

“ I understand you,” said the conscience-stricken father, bowing his head lower and lower under a deep sense of humiliation, “ I understand you, Wilfred, and you are perhaps right. You think I am not fit to have such a gentle girl as mine with me, when I can speak so crossly to her as I often do. But yet she knows how my heart loves her too,”—and his voice faltered.

Mary was at her father's side in a moment. He kissed her thin white hand, as the tears started into his eyes.

“ But now tell me, Wilfred,” he added,—Mr. St. Clair's calm coldness evidently exercising a great mastery over him,—“ if I were to consent to this rather mad scheme of ours ”—(ours ! a thrilling hope darted through the hearts of the listeners !)—“ how had you thought of managing it—for probably you had not thought of it before just now ? ”

“ No, sir,” replied Mr. St. Clair, wishing from the bottom of his soul that he had ; “ the idea has only occurred to me since I came here. But my plan was, at as early an hour as you could possibly contrive to-morrow morning—that we should be married,—when I should immediately start for Portsmouth to join my ship.”

“ That might be done certainly ; but much as I should like to please you all, I must say I do really think the scheme altogether a mighty mad one.”

“ We will take the blame of that on ourselves, my dear sir,” said Mrs. St. Clair, taking General Sydney's hand affectionately in her own ; “ and then you know we could live together again, and we should be as happy as we were before, for I cannot but think, my dear General Sydney, that you were happier then than you have been of late.”

“ Yes, yes,” said the poor old man, shaking her hand kindly, as the tears of weak old age coursed each other down his cheeks ; “ yes, you are quite right, and very kind,—and I was much happier then than I have been of late somehow,—I don't know how it is ! ”

“ You will, then, consent to our earnest wish ? ”

At that moment a ring at the door-bell was heard.

“ Eh—what ? ” said the General, looking confusedly about him, hastily dropping Mrs. St. Clair's hand, and wiping the traces of the tears from his face.

“ You will consent to the plan ? Pray, dear sir, say ‘ yes, ’ ”—for a sound of voices was heard in the little entrance.

“ I don't know—I don't know—I can say nothing just now.” And he sat listening in evident trepidation.

"The time, you know, dear sir, presses."

He made an impatient gesture with his hand to put Mrs. St. Clair aside, as she was standing between him and the door, for he seemed in an agony to see who was coming in.

The door opened, and, unannounced, Captain Normanton walked in.

The common simile of a "bolt falling at people's feet" would certainly not have been an overstrained one in this instance, for the consternation which his appearance produced was both visible and painful. Even he himself, with all his cool self-possession, seemed for a moment embarrassed by it; but quickly regaining his accustomed ease, he advanced to speak to General Sydney, who, pale as death, seemed ready to fall from his chair. He took no notice, however, of his agitation, but in his formal manner began making inquiries after his health, which the other answered in the most confused and incoherent way.

Mary had gone to the window, quite overcome. When she had come in that morning, she had told Susan to admit no one,—to say that they were particularly engaged, and could not be interrupted; and she knew that Susan would have been faithful to her injunctions.

The good girl afterwards assured her that she had; but that Captain Normanton declared that that was not meant to include him, so persisted in coming in.

This unwarrantable intrusion, therefore—the only ungentlemanlike act he ever was guilty of—excited in her an indignation which she could not conceal, heightened too as it was by the destruction of their hopes, of which she felt in an instant that his presence would surely be the means.

Mr. St. Clair instantly joined her at the window, and in doing so saw Mr. Bruce just entering the garden-gate. He made him, with Mary's permission, a sign to come in, which he readily obeyed.

Captain Normanton was evidently excessively annoyed when he saw him enter; and the General seemed also as if he felt some fresh cause of discomfort had arrived, having some indistinct idea of there not being any very great cordiality between the two.

Mary greeted him with the greatest kindness; and after speaking a few words to the General and Mrs. St. Clair, he joined her and Wilfred at the window. The latter went up to his mother, and saying that he should not give up his hope yet, begged her to engage Captain Normanton in conversation, while he spoke again to General Sydney. He then went, and sitting down by him, said in a low voice,—

"You will not let this interruption have any effect on your

decision, I trust, dear sir; you had agreed to my mother's reasoning, I think——"

"I had done no such thing," said the General in a low, tremulous voice of extreme alarm, "and I don't mean to do it. I wonder how a sensible woman like your mother could have thought of it."

"If such is your opinion now, sir, it was not a few minutes ago," said Mr. St. Clair, with a calm rebuke in his pale agitated countenance, beneath which General Sydney's eye quailed and sunk—"and the cause of this change it is not difficult to guess. Captain Normanton's pretensions to Miss Sydney's hand—most dishonourable when he knows, as he does, that she is engaged to me—are no secret,—nor is it a secret that you have encouraged them. I do conjure you, sir, to reflect on what you are doing. You are breaking your word, solemnly pledged to us both, and you are rendering miserable the best child that ever God gave to earthly parent! Never," he continued, with the low, heaving breath of extreme emotion—"never will you bend or force her to this perfidy! You do not know her excellence! For her sake, then, dear sir—for the sake of the happy days we all once passed together—give her to me before I go."

Captain Normanton's whole attention throughout all his conversation with Mrs. St. Clair was fixed on what was going on between Mr. St. Clair and General Sydney, though he had not heard a word; but in intense apprehension he turned suddenly at that moment, and fixed his eye full on that of the old man, who, terrified beyond measure, rejected the entreaty made to him with contempt and indignation.

Mr. St. Clair rose without speaking another word. As he passed near Mrs. St. Clair, he whispered in a low voice, whose tone said everything to her: "Mother, let us go;" and then went round to the window, where Mary and Mr. Bruce were standing.

"Bruce," he said, in a voice of emotion that struck to the very heart of that sincere friend, "stay here, will you, as long as you can with that man, that Mary's absence may not be observed by him;" designating the General by a backward nod of his head. "I cannot be with you by two now, I must stay longer this last—last day."

"No no—no no! of course not. I'll stay here as long as this man does, if it be till midnight, and do you stay with her as long as she can with you. I'll go and talk to the old General, and cover her retreat for you."

"God bless you! God bless you!" exclaimed the unhappy young man, as he wrung his friend's hand. "Mary," he then said, "you will come with us?—I must speak to you before I go."

Mrs. St Clair had turned to wish her "good-bye," but Mary, putting her arm in hers, left the room with her. Mr. St. Clair followed, bowing coldly to Captain Normanton, but not being able to master himself sufficiently to take leave of General Sydney. In a moment more they were out of the house and the door had closed.

Captain Normanton turned pale with rage and disappointment; but had no power of course to prevent Mary's going, though he endeavoured to attract General Sydney's attention to it by saying aloud as she passed,—

"Miss Sydney, are you going away?"

But Mr. Bruce, who was thoroughly his equal in all sorts of manœuvres, having placed himself exactly before the General, so that he could scarcely see any one, continued detailing something with wonderful animation till all were safely out, and even then continued his harangue for some time, fearful lest the old man should perceive his daughter's absence, and send in search of her before she were past recall.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Sincerity! thou first of virtues!
 Let never mortal leave thy onway path!
 Although the earth should ope, and from the depth
 Of hell destruction cry aloud
 To take dissimulation's winding way. DOUGLAS:

As soon as the trio had passed through the garden, Mrs. St. Clair, partaking Mr. Bruce's fear of a recall, silently led the way through a little gate to a path that ran along the inner side of the hedge, and moved swiftly on till they were arrived at a copse which she knew would completely shelter them from the view of a pursuer.

Nor would the precaution have proved needless, had it not been for the fearless determination of Mr. Bruce, whose bold spirit, stimulated at once by regard for his friends and indignation at Captain Normanton's conduct, made him assume an authoritative tone which completely overawed the poor timid General.

"Why, where is Mary?" asked the latter in great irritation; when he at last perceived her absence. "Ring the bell for her, Mr. Bruce; what can she be doing?"

"It will be useless, I think, sir, to ring, unless you wish it particularly, for Miss Sydney is of course gone with Mrs. St. Clair and her son. I suppose so, at least; for I know I should be very indignant if the woman I were engaged to were

to leave me when I was going to sea for years, to stay talking with other men. I should think she behaved neither with feeling nor propriety; but of course I can ring if you wish it"—he having held the bell in his hand all the time to prevent Captain Normanton from doing so.

"Ah!—well—no, no, never mind then."

And the wretched old man looked in alarm from the one to the other of his tyrants, obeying Mr. Bruce—happily—because he had been the last speaker, and because he saw that Captain Normanton dared not oppose what he had said.

Mary was therefore left in peace with her friends, walking on in silent sadness through the almost leafless woods, and striving to summon up fortitude for the parting that was so soon to come.

She had had no thought of eluding her father's pursuit; but anxious to enjoy the last hours of Mr. St. Clair's society without interruption, she now proposed going to a sequestered spot near there, where she knew no one was likely to come;—a beautiful little dell, known by the name of the "Dripping Well,"—there being a rock at the end of it, through which large drops of water were perpetually filtering, falling first into a natural basin below, then running—a little shining stream—through the thick tall trees and tangled underwood around. This narrow dell, with its steep paths and many flowers, had, ever since she first visited it, been a favourite resort of hers; and thither she now led the way, to pass some of the sad moments of intercourse that yet remained to her in quiet with her friends.

The little vale was in parts quite hot with the sun's rays—sheltered as it was from every breath of wind; and Mrs. St. Clair, pointing with a smile to a part of the bank that the sun had quite dried, strolled on herself still further.

They sat down. Mr. St. Clair's mind was in that state of confusion, in which no feeling seems in its right place. Tossed about in every direction—now fired with indignation—now borne down by despondency, he was incapable of thinking or of feeling anything distinctly. Mary at length implored him to lift up his heart to God, and look to Him for strength and comfort. She prayed for him silently and earnestly; and then spoke with that courage and bright faith which were such beautiful fruits of the Spirit in her.

"You must not fear for me, Wilfred," she said; "you know how fully I trust God's promises, and that is in itself peace. And it is such a blessing to have your love to think of too! Were it not for that, how much worse would my lot be! If I had had no love and no engagement, I might have fancied it my duty to have sacrificed myself to my father's wishes—and how dreadful would that have been! Now as each trouble occurs, I think, 'It

will pass—it will pass:—and it does pass; and when the bitter draught is over, I come to the jewels at the bottom of the cup: your love, and my gracious God's love,—and they look all the brighter for the stream that had washed over them. No, dear Wilfred, do not fear for me!”

“I cannot help it,” he replied sadly, “when I know what constant misery you will be exposed to, and see you look so pale and thin even now; and I am almost wicked enough still to wish you had yielded to my entreaty last night. You would then have been in peace!”

“I am in peace now, Wilfred, though perhaps in sorrow; but then peace would have flown far from me, for conscience would have been ill at ease.”

“It would have been but a few hours' concealment, Mary, and then we should have told him.”

“And during those few hours what a weight of guilt should I have placed upon my heart. Deceit, treachery, falsehood!”

“But for so short a time!”

“The deed short, but the remembrance very long, Wilfred! Just think what my life to-day would have been—I should have had to meet my father as usual, and, when in high spirits, as he was this morning, he always makes a great many inquiries into my little concerns: ‘what I read the evening before,’ ‘how my work got on,’ &c. I must have invented falsehoods, for I should not have dared to say I had been out, and had seen you. Then how could I have escaped to your mother's without making some excuse for leaving him on so fine a day, when otherwise we should have walked together. I must have told a thousand falsehoods; and then with their guilt on my heart and lips, I should have had to kneel before my God, take vows before Him, and implore His blessing. Ah! my beloved! you can never regret that I have not given myself to you, the false—the sinful creature I should then have been! And to have had to go to my father—and confess—not only my marriage—but my falsehoods too! Wilfred, my heart would have broken!”

“Oh! I see it all—I see it all now!” he exclaimed; “and I do indeed bless God it was not done. I did not think of the unworthy ways through which the path of concealment would have lain—must always lie.”

“And it would have been only to spare myself a little trial and vexation, Wilfred, and how could I have asked God's blessing—and then what but misery could I have expected? I think we might almost go through life, with that one short prayer: ‘Thy blessing, Lord!’ No! if we wait His good time, He will be with us, Wilfred, and on His unlimited love we may rest our whole fates.”

"Yes! you are right—ever, ever right! and it was only at that weak, faithless moment, that I regretted your decision. Now I bless God for it anew—now has His peace come to me again, and I can leave you to Him, and trust Him with His own dear child. This blissful, sunny little dell! how shall I think of it when I am far away!—the storms of passion all hushed now, the peace of God within my forgiven heart, and you by my side, my guide to Heaven—the angel of God to me! Oh, Mary, blessed indeed is this moment, coming as it does after such a storm of human passions! Ah! could the world but know what there is in the peace of God, and in the joy of his felt presence! Could I myself but always realize it, how blessed, how happy should I be! But I cannot always feel it, Mary; I have not your clear views and firm faith, and I cannot always lay hold on the hope that is set before me. You will feel for my weakness, and ask strength for me. And now I would beg you to bear a message to your father. I could not, when I left his house, conquer myself sufficiently to take leave of him; will you then tell him that I wish him every good, every blessing that is in God's gift; that I bequeath you to him as one for whose happiness he must be answerable to God, as well as to me; that though I will never urge you to marry without his consent, yet that never, while life beats in my breast, will I resign my claim to you into any hands but your own. Tell him this, and that I charge him, as God shall call him to account, to be true to me and true to you in this matter. Will you tell him this?"

"I will, Wilfred; but do not think hardly of him, for he is weak, and does not know what to do. He is terrified by Captain Normanton, and dares not oppose him; and I am convinced it is his vexation at my hindering my own happiness, as he thinks, that makes him often so angry with me. He is very unhappy, dear Wilfred, and all the faith and love he seemed to have is gone, or hid behind the dark cloud which has passed between his spirit and God. Pray for him, pray for him, my dearest! and remember I have two *such* things in view,—seeing you again, and Heaven!"

Mrs. St. Clair now called them, saying it was too damp to remain there longer, as the sun had sunk low; that she was going home, and wished them to follow. They rose, and climbed the rough steep path that led through the wood to the upper world again; and though the air had become chill down in the little valley, yet the sun was still shining bright and warm in the lane and on the open common, and they lingered yet awhile as they walked along.

"It is wonderful," said Mr. St. Clair, "that I can feel the happiness I do just now, when parting from you is so near; but

it seems as if the poison of that thought were kept from mixing with the joy which rises—I know not whence—in my heart."

"I am sure," replied Mary, "that if we could always keep the real love of God glowing warmly within us, we should be kept so far above the world, as scarcely to be swayed by its storms and troubles. The promise is 'perfect peace' to them whose minds are 'stayed upon God;' and I can fully believe, from the happiness which I too feel—feel too, when I look at you, and know we must soon part for years—that could we always so live with God, the trials of life would almost vanish. But our hearts sink from Him, and then the pain returns."

"It does—sorely! Still it is a great thing to know where there is strength to be had, and how to obtain it. Oh! if like you, I could feel the certainty of my salvation—of never falling from God, I should have more stable peace than I have. But the fear of failing at last, makes me so often despondent. When you speak, I sometimes seem able to feel my title to everlasting life; but left alone, mists of doubt fall again upon me. But God's strong arm will 'rend that veil from the top to the bottom' for me some day, I do believe; for with a strange contradiction of mind, I cannot but feel myself to be a child of God, though I cannot enjoy the certainty of it. Yes, if I could not feel sure of His love, and of seeing you, and being with you in His blessed presence hereafter, and for ever—to part with you now, would be to part with life itself."

They went into the house, and rested there awhile; but Mary soon said,—her low, sad voice trembling,—

"I must be going, Wilfred. You and your mother will, I am sure, come part of the way with me?"

"One turn in the garden first, Mary."

They rose, and went out together.

"I wanted you to tell Bruce from me not to care now for staying as long as Captain Normanton does, for it signifies not as you will have left me, and perhaps we had better be returning to Portsmouth. But tell him to do as he likes, and that I will wait for him here. Is Captain Normanton likely to dine with you?"

"He generally does when he comes to see us; but my father, you know, goes to bed early, and then of course he goes away."

"I have been thinking, dear Mary—you will not mind my saying it—that perhaps if you could in some way feel differently towards him, it might have a good effect. I know your heart does really feel for him when he is away, and I think —; but I can hardly bear to seem to blame, or give you advice."

"Why not, Wilfred? If you knew how often I have to blame myself, you would be glad to save me that sorrow; and it would be so great a pleasure in your absence to feel that it was by your advice that I was acting—that God was speaking to me through you, and to be able to say to both, 'Thy words have I hid in my heart.'"

He paused a moment to "hide *those* words in his heart," as he felt how inexpressibly blessed was this intercommunion of their souls—the thoughts of each exalting the happiness of the other.

"How wonderful," he said, forgetting for the moment the subject he had begun upon, "is the change within me, Mary, since—little more than a year ago—I first knew you. When I asked you then to love me, and you told me with such pure and simple truth that you did, I thought myself the happiest creature on earth; but now I could almost fancy myself the happiest being in heaven; so infinitely does my nature seem raised above what it was then. I then thought,—'how pleasant to spend my time with you;' I now feel 'how blessed to spend eternity with you,'—for surely God will grant me that. He cannot so have intertwined our every thought and feeling here—have bound us together by ties so strong, so unnumbered, so sanctified, without meaning to let us live together for ever in His divine presence, and help each other, as we have done here, to praise and glorify His holy Name. Oh!" he added, with a bursting sigh, "that we were already there—there where there is no separation,

" 'Where friends who never part for ever meet;'

where, looking on the face we love, we shall see it ever brightening in the light of God's countenance, ever glowing with increasing love—beaming with enlarging intelligence! What a oneness there is, when Christian love is joined to natural!"

"Yes, 'for the pulses that beat in the souls of God's people, all come from the throb of the one great heart above.'"^{*}

"Beautiful thought!—oh, beautiful thought! But, Mary, what I was going to say about Captain Normanton was, that if you could conquer your fear and abhorrence of him a little, and show him some of the pity and kindness I know you feel for him, I think it might touch him, and make him less vehement, perhaps, in the selfish course he is now pursuing. I am convinced he is a man of deep feeling; but the absolute rule a captain has in his own vessel seldom softens a harsh character; and I think also, I have unfeelingly shown too much of triumph over him, and Bruce has been too hard with him. And even you, my gentle love, have always—what with fear and what

* Krumacher.

with dislike—been so cold to him, that pride and pique, I feel sure, have been greatly mixed with his love for you, giving to it a harsh and tyrannic, instead of a generous and self-sacrificing, character. Do not think me ungrateful, Mary dear, for what I say ; but if you felt that you could show him more gentle compassion, I cannot but think it would arouse his more generous feelings, and tend to soften and soothe his proud and naturally wounded heart. Do you think I am wrong?"

"No—oh no! I see how unkind I have been. I have always felt it a difficulty to know how to act; for I have so little knowledge of the world or of people's characters, and I never had any one till I knew you, Wilfred, and your kindest mother, to whom I could speak of such things, and she is so gentle, she can scarcely bear to advise, fearing like you I think, to seem to blame."

"Yes, that was my fear."

"Oh, I do so thank you for speaking to me, for one's lonely heart gets so timorous sometimes. But I will try and conquer my fear of him; and perhaps, if I could ever get courage enough to speak openly to him, it might soften him, and perhaps—oh, perhaps, it might even make him my friend instead of grieving me as he now does. I do think with you, that he has very deep and even tender feelings at times; it is only his air of command—as if he felt he had power over me—which has made me so great a coward with him. But I will try and change my manner this very day, and I will write and tell you if it goes on more comfortably in consequence."

"Do; and promise me also, Mary, always to tell me of any trouble that you may have, else I shall never feel at ease—always fancying that trials are besetting you which you hide from me."

"And you will always tell me of anything in which you think I am wrong; for again I cannot say how much I thank you for having done it now, it seems to put us so much more in our right places as regards each other,—‘the man the head of the woman’—that wise and kind arrangement of the Lord's."

"Well! if man is ‘the head of the woman,’ woman may be truly called ‘the heart of the man;’ for hard and cruel would my heart have become, I am sure, had it remained unsoftened by yours, Mary."

"You could never have become hard or cruel, Wilfred,—never. But now—oh!—I must be going home,—I must not keep my father waiting. I will give your message to Mr. Bruce, and I will try indeed to do as you have wished me towards Captain Normanton."

They joined Mrs. St. Clair at the house, and then proceeded

towards General Sydney's, returning by the same way that they had come. When they had reached the quiet wood, Mrs. St. Clair wished Mary good-bye, saying she would wait there while Wilfred went on with her to the more open part, when she thought he had better return, as it might only irritate General Sydney if he saw him with her again.

They went on therefore together. And now, when it was come to the last moment, nature would have her way. Last words, last blessings were repeated over and over again, and still over and over again had they to be repeated. They parted—met—parted—and, “urged by strong attraction, met again.”

The struggle seemed too great! At last Mrs. St. Clair went to them, and begged her son to return, saying she would go on a little way with Mary.

“One moment more,” he cried in agony—“but one moment more! Even this is happiness compared to having her shut quite from my sight.”

“No, Wilfred,” said Mary, at last, “go—go; it is an agony too great! Write to me to-morrow—to-night, and I will to you. Pray—oh! go—go.”

He went; and accompanied by her kind friend, she pursued her way to her home. She paused before reaching the house, to try and check the tears that still streamed resistlessly, and to soothe down the tearing sobs; but every thought of Wilfred, as it rushed across her, brought them back again. At length, with a great effort, she became calmer; and kissing Mrs. St. Clair with quivering lips, she turned silently to her unhappy home.

CHAPTER XLIV.

You have given a thrill
To the sole chord that keeps its music still.

A. H. DEURY.

As soon as Mary entered the gate, Mr. Bruce went out to meet her; and seeing how agitated she was, detained her a little while in the garden,—asking the names of everything there, dead or alive—that she might regain her composure before she went into the house. She felt grateful for his consideration; and when she dared trust her voice, she gave him Mr. St. Clair's message.

“Perhaps then I had better go at once,” he said; “for the sooner he is gone the better for him. Your father, Miss Sydney, was kind enough to ask me to dinner, but I am sure he will excuse me—unless indeed my being here can be of the slightest service to you?”

"Thank you ; but I think with you, that the sooner he is gone the better."

Mr. Bruce would fain have stayed. He had passed three or four of the most irksome hours that probably he had ever spent in his life. He had no patience to bear with the weak old General, and hated the very sight of Captain Normanton, while his own internal thoughts had not been of the most cheering description. He had left the task of entertaining his host to his fellow-visitor ; but afraid of quitting the house lest his doing so should put the others also in motion and cause Mary's last hours with Mr. St. Clair to be disturbed, he had remained in-doors, restlessly fidgeting up and down in the little apartment, in the most tormenting manner possible, both to himself and his companions.

The only object which he had apparently had in view, was the surreptitious appropriation of small properties belonging to Mary, which, it is to be concluded, he thought she could not want, and would not miss ; dogs, trees, men, boats—careless sketches of her pencil on odd-shaped scraps of paper—a mark out of her book (carefully putting in something else to keep the place), a flower, &c. ; and it seemed as if these small depredations were requisite to keep the life within him, for if at any time he sat still for a few minutes, he seemed constrained to get up, and take a fresh "cruise" round the room ; when having made a capture of some prize of the above-mentioned nature, he would be tranquillized for a few minutes, then make a fresh start again in chase.

All these proceedings were minutely observed by Captain Normanton—who, without having the remotest intention of being a spy on other people's affairs, had yet instinctively the habit of watching all that went on around him, and who possessed, moreover, the power of tracing from its rise to its issue the train of thought and feeling in another, with as unerring a sagacity as that with which the noble savage of the Western World follows the trail of his enemy, or the viewless tracks of the light-footed game he pursues.

He felt convinced by what he saw that day, that either Mr. Bruce was a most devoted friend indeed to Mr. St. Clair, or that he was himself attached to Mary Sydney, and which of the two was the real case, he determined before he left the house that night to ascertain.

When Mr. Bruce, therefore, went into the garden to join Mary, he went to the window ; and after seeing them speaking together for a few moments, he was perfectly convinced as to which was the truth.

He felt stricken to the heart ! It was impossible but that such a discovery should produce a most painful comparison between his own conduct and that of Mr. Bruce ; and however anxious he

might be to justify himself in his own eyes for the course he was pursuing, he could not at that moment but feel how infinitely more noble was the conduct of the other—how disinterested his exertions—how devoted his friendship! He shrank confounded under the comparison.

It was indeed one of the strange inconsistencies of human nature, that Captain Normanton should ever have thought that riches—which would to him have been as the light dust in the balance compared with his love for Mary—should be an object of all-prevailing value with her; that when he would willingly—willingly—have laid down every advantage he possessed in life—fortune, station, connections, everything, to have obtained her love, he could yet delude himself into the belief that she would be happier in the possession of these things with a man she did not love, than in comparative poverty with one who possessed all her affections.

His mind now, however, seemed completely unhinged. A light had forced itself upon him against which it was vain to strive to close his eyes.

The sight of Mary too at that moment troubled him to the very depth of his soul. He could not but perceive the strong traces of the grief she had just been called upon to endure; and spite of the jealousy which that was calculated to produce, the deep feeling he had for her made him suffer intensely at the knowledge of her sufferings.

After a few minutes she came into the room with a conscious, nervous manner; not liking to raise her eyes—they were so heavy with weeping—to those to whom she spoke, and stopping with transparent artifice, to examine every article that lay in her way, as if it were of unusual interest.

Her father seemed inclined to receive her harshly, for he was afraid Captain Normanton might be displeased at her long absence; and he was also under that irritation of feeling which often exists towards those we are sensible of having injured. He looked at her scowlingly from under his shaggy eyebrows, but the sight of her tearful countenance melted the hard thoughts from his heart; and Mr. Bruce also, having seen the storm ready to burst, had again interposed himself between them, and tried to cover her entrance, as he had effectually secured her retreat.

Captain Normanton went directly to speak to her. Her first impulse on seeing him by her side was to turn and leave the room; but remembering Mr. St. Clair's wishes, she controlled herself, and answered in an unusually kind manner to the observation on some indifferent subject which he made. He was surprised, and evidently touched; and the tone of his voice,

when next he spoke, showed that he was so. She involuntarily looked up.

What a change was there in his countenance—so full of that exceeding tenderness which, as has been said, occasionally passed over it, but which she then observed for the first time.

“Oh! had God heard her prayer? Had He seen, and would He bless her efforts to do right? Would He touch that proud and obdurate heart, and fill it with generous compassion for her?”

She felt towards him a glow of kindness she had never felt before; and had she been alone with him at that moment, she might perhaps have thrown herself on his honour and compassion, and besought him to have mercy on her, and no longer to press a suit which caused her such infinite misery.

Moments there are in life on which everything seems to depend, from which seem to radiate all the various issues of our existence! Had circumstances favoured that appeal—had she been courageous enough to make it—how might the colouring of her fate have been altered! But for some wise purpose it was prevented; and, as words of unwonted confidence rose to her lips, and feelings of unwonted kindness filled—even to overflowing—the heart of her companion—the General's voice was heard calling to her.

He spoke gently however, telling her that Mr. Bruce said he was in a hurry to return to Portsmouth, and therefore could not stay to dine with them. She turned to Mr. Bruce and said something kind; then going to the table she wrote a few lines to Mr. St. Clair. She begged him not to fear for her, and told him how kind her father and every one had been. She said she had tried to follow his advice, and felt sure that a blessing would attend them both.

She then gave the note to Mr. Bruce, simply folded up and directed, feeling that it was as secure, as if every seal of every office in the kingdom were placed upon it. Blest confidence! Happy who inspire,—happy who feel it!

When Mr. Bruce was gone, she went to dress for dinner; and when in her own room, she could but kneel down and thank her God who had been so gracious to her—soothing her after her sad parting, by the unusual kindness which He had caused her to meet with in her home.

She rose refreshed from even that short communion with her Heavenly Father; and quickly preparing herself for dinner, she descended with an almost light heart, to do the honours of her table, though it was to the two persons whom in general she met with so much dread.

Surely "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers!"

With all her endeavours, however, it was impossible to make a party composed of such incongruous materials a lively or a pleasant one; and she could not but feel it an infinite relief when the hour came for the General's retiring to his room, and for Captain Normanton's departure.

CHAPTER XLV.

And who can tell the deep and hidden strife—
The soul's fierce struggle between death and life!

A. H. DRURY.

To Captain Normanton too, the breaking up of that little party was a relief; for though never before had Mary seemed so touching—so much to be loved, yet never before had the indulgence of his feelings towards her met with an opposing power in his own breast. Ah! what are all external difficulties, compared to the internal strife, when we "see the right, and yet the wrong pursue!"

He took leave of her with sensations impossible to describe, for, for the first time, the thought of really losing her presented itself to his mind. Not that outward circumstances seemed to point to it so much even as usual, for his rival was away for years, and he felt more than ever how completely General Sydney was under his influence, but it was that he was conscious of a shaking in his own resolution—a doubt of his own purpose that he had never experienced before. What he felt was not the heart-sickening fear which has probably visited every being who has truly loved, coming with the quivering questions: "Shall I win? Shall I succeed?" but it was the far more awful question: "Ought I to win? Ought I to succeed?" Oh, fearful moment! when the light of truth first flashes on the agonizing words: "Pluck out the right eye, cut off the right hand!"

Who would have been that man as he began his solitary homeward walk that night? He felt distracted! now hurrying forward,—now stopping—now turning back again with desperate steps, then forcing himself on anew: wild, and vehement, and incoherent words breaking forth continually, and often

"The upward lifting of the eye,
When none but God was near."

Ah! had he been really conscious of that blessed Presence, how

urgently would he have implored his Heavenly Father to be "with him in that fire."

At length there was a long, long pause, while there he stood, "beneath the solitary heaven,"—his face buried in his hands, his whole frame convulsed with emotion, while the strife as of life and death was going on within him. At length with sudden energy he exclaimed aloud, "I will, I will."

Yes! he would give up all—every feeling, every thought, every hope! He would write to her that very night; he would confess the wrong he had done, freely, humbly—and offer every service in his power to facilitate her union with Mr. St. Clair. He would earn her respect, her friendship, her gratitude—if he could not her affection; and Mr. Bruce should see that one besides himself, could love nobly, though in vain.

It was a splendid triumph of the finer part of our nature over its more selfish passions, and if ever virtue had its own reward, it was at that moment—in that bounding spirit and expanding heart. The pain of the sacrifice was lost—absolutely lost—in the joy of the victory; and a conscious greatness of purpose extinguished for the time every vain regret.

Under the stimulus of these high feelings he pressed on at a rapid pace, desiring earnestly to see Mr. St. Clair if possible, before his departure from Hastings, being anxious to set his heart at ease, and feeling also a restless desire to begin the work he had taken in hand; accompanied perhaps unconsciously, by a wish to put an impassable barrier at once between himself and all power of retraction.

On his arrival at the hotel therefore, he was much grieved at finding that Mr. St. Clair had left it about two hours before; but determining to follow him, he ordered a chaise immediately to be got ready.

He mounted the stairs with a step rather more languid and heavy than that which had borne him so swiftly there; for the obsequious civility of the people, the bright glare of lights, and the busy, worldly look of everything about, had with a disenchanting touch, lowered the tone of enthusiasm which had animated him when alone in the elevating quiet of the country, and with the light of the spiritualizing moon so silently and tranquilly lying around him. Yet the good purpose of his soul was not shaken;—more truly great perhaps, at that moment of comparative depression, than when sustained by the first burst of enthusiasm. "He would but write a few lines to Miss Sydney, and then set off in pursuit of her betrothed."

But mightier influences were about to try his resolution than the mere outward change from the face of nature to that of artificial life!

As he was slowly mounting the staircase, he heard his name whispered down by a cheerful, laughing voice; and looking up, he saw a lady leaning over the opposite banisters, her arms resting on them, and her pleased, affectionate look lighted strongly up by the glare of the lamp near which she was standing.

His heart sank within him.

It was the first time in his life that he had ever heard his sister's voice, or met his sister's eye, without pleasure. Infinitely elevated as his mind was above hers—twins they were in birth, and twins in affection; bound together by that mysterious tie which is ever so strong and so strange.

"Why, Sigismund!" she whisperingly exclaimed again, as she saw him with arrested step, and countenance of extraordinary discomposure standing on the stairs below her,—*"what is the matter?—you don't seem at all delighted to see me—so unexpectedly too!"*

He made no answer—he could not; but slower, and with heavier step even than before, he mounted the stairs; then kissing her kindly, when he got into the room, he said:—

"How came you here, my dear Augusta?"

"I wanted change of air after my cold," she replied, "and had got tired of my own company, there are so few people in town—so thought I would run down here—sure you know of seeing you here sooner or later." And she looked at him with a meaning smile.

He was in no mood to answer it, however, or to advert in any way to the cause that had always led him to that place; but saying it was very good of her to come, he went and sat down at a table apart, and with firm heart, but trembling hand began writing to Mary Sydney.

"Sigismund," she exclaimed again, after looking at him for a minute or two, "what is the matter with you? You do not seem, as I said before, the least pleased to see me; and you look—if I may speak it with all tender respect—rather as if you were—mad. Are you *not* glad to see me?"

"I should be so, as I always am," he replied without raising his eyes from his paper, "were it not that I am necessitated to go away myself instantly."

"Go away! not to-night?"

"Yes, to-night—immediately in fact."

"My dear Sigismund," she said kindly, going and sitting down close to him, and looking earnestly in his face, "something is the matter I am sure."

"Dear Augusta," he said, putting his hand affectionately in hers, "I will tell you all presently, but let me finish this note first."

She sat by him in silence. He tried to finish his letter; but after a few minutes looking up at her with an equivocal smile and a flushed countenance, he said:—

"I must ask you, my dear love, to go from me for a few minutes till I have done this, for I cannot write somehow while you are by me."

She rose, but sat down again the next moment, and said:—

"Now, Sigismund, I am sure you are doing something foolish; you always do, you know, when you act without my sage counsel and advice. So now confess—are you not perpetrating some great folly, which you are ashamed and afraid of my knowing?"

"Ashamed—certainly not," he replied, as the approving thought of a virtuous resolve came across him.

"Afraid then?"

"Never mind," he said; "only let me finish this now, for I must be going."

"Finish it if you like, but promise me not to send it, till I have spoken to you again."

"Very well." And she left him and went to the fire.

He wrote on, but hurriedly and disconnectedly; and often his hand was put to his forehead, and often his head rested on it. At last his note was finished, hastily read over—folded, sealed, and directed.

He rose, and was ringing the bell when Lady Davenport stopped his hand.

"Your promise, faithless man!"

"Well, what do you wish to say, for I am hurried?"

"That letter is—to Miss Sydney, I imagine."

He nodded assent.

"Haven't you seen her to-day?"

"I have."

"Then what can have occurred since, to make it necessary for you to write? I ask, my dear Sigismund," she added, for he was beginning to show impatience, "because I see you are agitated, and your mind thrown off its balance; and when you act in those moods, you—and all of us indeed—are apt to do things that we afterwards repent. Rest therefore a little while, let me beg of you,—for you are tired and heated with your walk—and think over this letter, whatever it may be—coolly, before you send it. You need not tell me what there is in it, you know"—fully determined that he should—"but do, I entreat of you, reflect over its contents in your own mind, before you do what you can never perhaps undo."

She sat down on the sofa, and gently drew him down by her side.

"It is useless waiting, Augusta," he said, "for nothing can or shall alter my determination."

"Your determination! I didn't know that your letter contained anything so awful as a determination," she exclaimed; "so there you have let me into a little of your secret."

He coloured with vexation.

His sister saw her advantage, and continued:—

"But first do let me ask, why all of a sudden there is to be any secret at all between us, about this matter? Have you not as yet, told me everything about your love?—its hopes, its fears, its everything? And have I, Sigismund, ever given you bad advice, or failed to do what I could to forward your wishes?" And her voice trembled for a moment with genuine emotion.

"No, my dear sister, you have ever been most kind and affectionate; and I only wished to defer telling you my present resolution, because I was determined it should not be shaken and yet did not wish to oppose you, should your opinion not be the same as mine."

"If you are determined to be determined, or in other words to be obstinate, then of course I have nothing more to say." And she was silent, knowing well the disposition she had to deal with.

Captain Normanton sat by her side, not having the resolution to get up and ring the bell to despatch his letter, yet in agonies to have it safely gone,—his words indeed beyond recall;—despising himself also for letting any living soul have the power over him which he felt Lady Davenport had.

The good, as well as the weak part of his character aided in this subjugation of his mind to her, for, harsh to all other living things, yet, knowing that her love to him was unbounded, his almost equal affection could not bear to wound her. This she knew; and, unscrupulous in her use of every means which could enable her to carry any point she had once set her mind upon, she had played upon his feelings till she had obtained an almost absolute empire over him. His nobler qualities she was a total stranger to, and often had she laughed him out of feelings that would have done credit to the best of mankind. Truth and sincerity were as life to him; and though strong will and prejudice did at times warp his judgment till he put wrong for right, and right for wrong—yet never did he clearly see a straight line of action, and deliberately choose a crooked one.

With her, straight or crooked was all the same. True or false, right or wrong, the convenient word was to be spoken, the convenient thing done. Her brother had lived with her too little to be aware of her real character, and was besides too much blinded by his affection for her and by hers for him, to

scrutinize closely into her ways and means; and had he even thought he saw a fault, it would soon have been smoothed over by the all-adjusting hand of blind affection.

Blind indeed, it truly was—instinctive, not rational. Yet such as it was, it was very beautiful! No day of their lives passed but what they either saw or wrote to each other; nothing could grieve the one, without the sorrow passing through the heart of the other—nothing rejoice the one, but what gladness lit up the other's eye. In characters so little accessible in general to soft emotions, this was the more remarkable; and it was the less to have been expected even from the sister's gay, satirical, worldly character, than from her brother's haughty and reserved, but nevertheless, feeling mind.

It might seem strange that an affection so devoted as Lady Davenport's could endure a rival in her brother's heart; but the very excess of it had the unusual effect of excluding jealousy. Her heart was set upon her brother's happiness, let it consist in what it might; and if Mary Sydney were necessary to that happiness, she was as much to be secured for him, as would have been a coveted house, title, or estate.

It was one of her boasts that never yet had she determined on anything, and failed in obtaining it. At seventeen, she determined she would be married before the year was out, and she was married. She determined that her husband should be a peer, and he was a peer. She determined that she would live chiefly in London, and in London she lived—her husband,—a man not young, nor in general weak-minded, and whose whole heart had hitherto been in his horses and hounds, his bugles and beagles,—finding himself, to his ceaseless astonishment, established there for ten months out of the year, at the head of ~~every~~ good and excellently well-kept establishment!

In this astonishment he lived for ten years—then died;—one of those whose epitaph might well have been,

“Born on such a day, and died on such another, with an interval of fifty years.”

His widow—they had no children—had determined to have all his property which was not entailed, settled on herself; the opening of his will therefore was no matter of anxiety to her. Rich, handsome, gay, clever, and entertaining, many were the opportunities afforded her of marrying again; but caring not much for the affections of home, and greatly enjoying the unbounded liberty and abundant means she now possessed, she preferred retaining them in quiet, to giving herself the trouble of managing another husband.

The love she had for her brother gave employment—together

with some old pensioners, and some poor school-children, whom she maintained liberally, and frightened dreadfully—to whatever there might be of kindly in her nature; and these, with company, and fashion, and ceaseless tent-stitch, and the clever literary and scientific works of the day—fully occupied the round of her existence. Novels she could not endure; the foolish ones disgusted her caustic good sense, and the feelings portrayed in those of higher tone found no echo in her unsympathizing bosom. “If people are miserable,” she used to say, “let them keep it to themselves, and not inoculate others with their low spirits; and if they are happy, they need not have the impertinent folly of fancying that others care about it.”

Such was the person under whose influence Captain Norman-ton was now sitting—his better nature struggling within him, but daunted by her bold and subtle spirit.

Lady Davenport suspected from his manner that he was full just then of some of his “utopian ideas—his chivalrous nonsense,” as she liked to call his often generous bursts of feeling; and being convinced that they must point in some way or other to Mary Sydney, she resolved to laugh him out of them. She had determined that he should marry her, and was determined to prove her power invincible. She sat therefore in smiling silence by his side, enjoying in anticipation the triumph she felt sure of obtaining. Not hers the delicacy that could feel for the embarrassment of even one so dearly loved, nor hers the generous mind that would relieve it. On the contrary, she amused herself with his uneasiness, as an angler might with the vain struggles of his prey; watching him—though without looking at him—as he restlessly moved, and often cleared his throat as if to speak. At length to his great relief the waiter entered, and announced that the chaise was at the door.

“Very well,” said Lady Davenport quickly, in a voice that dismissed the man in a moment.

“You are going, Sigismund—where?” she asked, in an authoritative manner; leaning back on the sofa, and slowly winding a piece of string round her finger.

“To Portsmouth.”

“What for?”

“I have business there.”

“So I suppose; particularly as you think it needful to leave me, just when I am come to see you.”

“I had ordered the chaise before I knew you were here, Augusta; and my business cannot be deferred. You know I would not leave you if I could help it.”

“Oh! I know that; only such sudden business seems strange,

and the mighty mystery you make about it seems—absurd; that's all."

"I have told you why I made a mystery about it," he said. "I am determined to carry out the intention I have formed, and I do not wish to have to oppose any reasons you might perhaps bring against it."

"No determination can be very wise or well considered, I imagine, which is afraid of meeting fair reason and argument."

"My intention can bear the test of any argument."

"Your intention—but perhaps not yourself, dear Sigismund; is that what you mean?" And she turned her sparkling eyes with a sly expression of good-humoured triumph and superiority upon him.

He could not resist her affectionate tone, though he felt his weakness and was galled by knowing that she felt it too.

"I always dislike opposing you," he replied; "for I hate equally the conquering, or the being conquered."

Lady Davenport smiled to herself, as she felt how little he need disturb himself as to the first; but she did not let him see that smile, but replied gaily:—

"Your dread of my opposition only proves to me, as I said before, that you know you are acting merely from some romantic impulse, and not from reason. Now is it not so, my own dear brother? Did you not get some ecstatic message from the melting moon to-night as you walked home?—some inspiration from the roving winds?"

"No, Augusta," he replied; "I got them from my own mind, and my own heart."

"Alas, poor brother! then is the case desperate indeed. But, in sober earnest, tell me, dear, what has happened; for I cannot bear that you should wantonly throw away perhaps all your life's happiness."

A spasm of agony rushed through his heart as she said these words; for then, for the first time, did the sacrifice he was purposing to make, rise before him, in all its overwhelming magnitude! He could not answer; and his sister, seeing she had touched the right chord, proceeded:—

"You have been writing, you say, to this pretty Mary——"

"Don't call her that!" he exclaimed, in sudden impatience starting up from the sofa—not enduring to hear her spoken of in that way, even by his sister.

"Very well, my foolish brother! sit down again then, and she shall be angel—goddess—whatever you like."

"I wish her to be, 'Miss Sydney'—that name comprises everything to me." And he sat down again, reluctantly.

"Well then! you have been writing to 'Miss Sydney;' and

you were I suspect, about to post after—her beloved” (with invidious emphasis), “were you not? and the purport of both operations—was—to——”

She paused lingeringly on the words; for she was too wary to hazard what might prove a wrong guess, and knew perfectly that she should get him to finish her sentence for her. He did so.

“It was to tell them both,” he said, agitatedly, “that I would no longer interfere with their happiness in each other, but forward it by every means in my power.”

“I thought as much!—And how came that beautiful idea into your head all of a sudden?”

Captain Normanton—though excessively annoyed and irritated, replied quietly, and with much feeling: “I could not but see how terribly she suffered from parting with him to-day; and when she spoke afterwards to me with unwonted kindness, my very heart melted within me, and I resolved to do all to forward her happiness.”

“You were quite right—and it was exactly like my own kind, sweet brother! The thing therefore to be considered is, what would best promote her happiness; and I do really think that upon so important a point, a hasty step should not be taken.”

“But if I do not go now, St. Clair will have sailed.”

“I dare say an hour or two will make no difference, and you must anyhow travel all night; so just let me tell them to take the chaise round till it is ordered again”—and she rang the bell, without giving him time to answer—“and we will talk over it a little; and then you can set off if you like it.” And she gave the order accordingly to the waiter when he appeared.

“Now then,” she said, sitting down by him again, and taking his hand affectionately in hers (for she really did admire him very much, though she thought him very foolish), “let us soberly consider what is best for the real happiness of this lovely girl.”

“It cannot be better promoted than by her marrying where she is so much attached, Augusta; my own tortured heart teaches me that but too well.”

“Perhaps so—for a certain time—say a year or so. But take the picture twenty years hence. Her father is dead—no great misfortune perhaps, only that unhappily with him dies his pension too. She has nothing—as it seems; he—her intended—little more; and that young-looking mother of his will live for ever with her jointure, small as that must be. They have a dozen children at the least—for the poor in fortune are always compensated in olive branches, as is well known. He toils away on the high seas, with an occasional glimpse at the distracting crew at home, from whom he gladly escapes again to the better-

ordered crew on board ship. She is wasted and worn—tormented by her dozens of children and her one servant, grows cross, sickly, untidy, and ugly, and during his short visits fills his ears with nothing but complaints; till out of all their mighty love there come only discomfort and discontent—disputes and dissensions.”

“You speak of him as if he were a beggar, and not a gentleman.”

“I beg his pardon, I am sure! I'll grant him all his dues—his 'lordly line of high St. Clair,' his handsome countenance—which you so generously talk of—and vast accomplishments; but those will not feed his family, nor keep his poor, over-worked wife from feeling peevish—looking, and being so.”

“I cannot bear to hear you talk in that way of her; a change like that could never occur.”

“‘Twas All-Soul's-eve, and Surrey's heart beat high,'”

and it was very well for him to see the 'ladye of his love' reflected in the enchanted mirror as then she was—all grace and loveliness—reclining beautifully on a couch, and reading his poems. But depend upon it, after twenty years of small children and small fortune, without a moment's leisure to snatch one flower of poesy along life's dusty highway, it would need no mighty wizard's hand to sweep the 'goodly vision all away.' Beauties must eat like others, and unhappily grow old—ay, and ugly too; and in England no one who is really poor can exist—as some foreigner said: 'En Angleterre avec l'argent on peut faire tout ce qu'on veut; mais sans argent . . . faut se pendre.'” (In England, with money, one can do all one likes; but without money . . . one must hang oneself.)

Captain Normanton sighed.

“They would not be rich certainly,” he said; “and it is that, as you know, which has made me persevere as I have done. But still love is beyond all—all riches!”

“I dare say it may be to some, but *I* like my comforts, so am for securing them to others. Besides which, I am perfectly sure that a sweet, affectionate, gentle creature like Miss Sydney, could not live long with a husband like you, my own dear brother, who would study her happiness from morn till night, and who had both power and will to gratify every wish and fancy of her heart, without very soon returning his affection; and then—what happiness there would be!”

“Oh! do not place such pictures before me,” he exclaimed, covering his face with his hands; “they make my very brain turn dizzy.”

* “Lay of the Last Minstrel.”

"To steady itself again with 'the sober certainty of waking bliss,' dear Sigismund. She is very young, and I should think, very plastic; and though I would not by any means say that I think it necessary, or even advisable, to 'begin with a little aversion,' yet I have seen many marriages turn out extremely well, where there was very little liking indeed, at first, on the woman's part. They expect nothing, and are not therefore disappointed—and that is saying a great deal in a marriage! Then any little pleasurable feeling that does come, is so very delightful!"

"You would not force a girl to marry if she did not like it?"

"Most assuredly I should, if I thought it good for her. Why! I should force her to learn what I chose, to go where I chose, to eat what I thought fit, to take tonics if I thought she required them—why not then make her marry a person I thought fit for her—who I was sure would make her happy? Look at all your love-matches, as they are called—see how they end! They have been allowed to have their way in one thing, so they fancy they are to have it in all; and one will have this, and the other will have that, till—paph! the one goes off on this side, and the other on the other, and there's nothing left. Or if they still endure to stay together, '*ils s'entre-dévorent comme les chats Irlandais.*'" (They devour each other like the Irish cats.)

"It is the case sometimes, certainly."

"Sometimes! it's always the case! But however, granting that my picture may be over-coloured, or over-shaded as you will say, and that where there is real love, and faith, and constancy, poverty—even with a large little family, may be tolerated, still it behoves us to ascertain that these things really exist. Now what do you say of this hero of yours in these respects? Has he that 'love, and faith, and constancy,' which is to make up for the want of everything else? What account would Mr. Sangrove—what would this Donna Mercedes, or Justizias, or whatever she is, give, as to these things? This ought seriously to be considered before this really beautiful girl is encouraged to do what might destroy her whole happiness for life. Did you think of this when you formed your heroic resolve to-night?"

"I cannot say I did," he answered,—his heart fluttering with returning hope, yet despising himself as he felt his selfish passions regaining their mastery over him.

"There now, you see! But however I don't mean to reproach you, your resolve was like yourself, generous, and kind, and good; but only it does not do, as you see, always to follow the first impulse without looking to all sides of the question. Miss Sydney ought certainly to be first made acquainted with what is said of Mr. St. Clair."

"She is acquainted with it."

"Who told her?"

"I did." And the crimson colour rose to his temples as he uttered the words in an almost inaudible voice, for he now felt how despicable were the motives that had chiefly led to the unfeeling act. He need not however have feared blame from his sister for it;—she had no delicacy of mind which could make her consider it other than a judicious and proper thing to do.

"You did quite right," she observed. "And what did she say?"

"That she wholly disbelieved it."

"There now, again!—you see how infatuated she is, and how little capable of judging what is best for herself."

"I certainly thought it my duty to tell her; but yet I could not but admire her the more—though I felt in a fury at the time—for not believing it. What could have made me believe such a thing of her?"

"Really Sigismund, you quite provoke me! Do you suppose that every one has your chivalrous, ultra-refined notions, you very silly, dear creature? Besides your admiring her the more for it, does not make this heartless, fickle boy a bit more worthy of her love—it only proves you to be so. Do pray therefore, I beseech you, let things take their own course. It is nonsense to talk of giving up a thing you never had; and as to your seeking it, that can do no harm to any one, I imagine, except to your own poor soft heart if you fail.

'But screw your courage to the sticking point,
And you'll not fail!'

Now! shall I tell them to put up the chaise for to-night? and do lock up that note in your desk; and to-morrow, when you have, as they say, 'slept upon it,' we can see what shall be done."

The chaise was dismissed.

Captain Normanton thoroughly wretched, wished his sister good night, and went to his own room.

Lady Davenport sat for some time after he had retired, on the sofa just where he had left her, lost in pleasing meditation. She had triumphed—and that was her great joy in life; and she saw before her a long vista of intrigue, and skilful management—and that animated her, as the sound of the trumpet stirs the hot war-horse. She had the exhilarating hope of subduing everything to her own wishes, and above all—to give her due credit—she thought she had perfectly secured her beloved brother's happiness. In great contentment therefore there she sat, her

eyes fixed on the fire, her fingers twisting the old piece of string round her finger, her smiles coming and going as she pursued in thought the various animated arguments, stirring battles, and glorious victories which were to be hers; till, hearing the clock strike twelve, she rose and retired.

Far different were Captain Normanton's feelings. When he left his sister, it was with such a sensation of utter misery as he had never experienced before. He sat down in his room, and leaning his arms on the table and burying his face on them, remained motionless for ages—his spirit crushed under a sense of degradation, which was alike new and overwhelming. His mind was too much disturbed to see anything clearly—he was tossed to and fro by the thoughts which thronged in—so numberless!

Till that night he had been able to argue himself into the belief that the course he had been following was right, and his mind had felt tranquil in its self-approbation; but now the bandage had been torn from his eyes, and he had been made to see the utter selfishness of his motives. With that clearer sight had come at first, as we have seen, a flood of such fine and generous feeling as had borne away all shame and regret. "He would abandon the ill he now first perceived; he would follow the bright path which repentant love, and nobleness of thought, displayed in such animated colours!"

Oh! had he then but asked the blessing of God on his intentions, and the strength of God to keep him firm to them, all might have been well! But he had resolved in his own strength alone, and had to be taught that that strength was perfect weakness. His mind during that beautiful oasis in his moral existence, had been,—to use a fine metaphor well quoted elsewhere,* "like a magnificent dome; but lighted all from beneath." No ray from heaven had gilded it, no blessing from above had been implored on it; therefore the ephemeral splendour had departed, and left him in darkness and desolation.

He went to rest, but sleep was impossible.

Those who have often lain awake upon their beds, may have observed that their thoughts at those times have come to them with peculiar clearness and precision. It may be from the stillness of the external world around; but more probably it is, that the perfect rest of the body allows to the spirit full play. Be that as it may, as Captain Normanton lay on his bed that night, his mind became perfectly clear and agonizingly acute in all its perceptions. Thought after thought seemed to come out of the former chaos sharply defined in every line and feature; and

* In "Harold."

as each one passed before him in turn, his wavering mind agreed with its suggestions. Now his generous feelings conquered, and his generous resolves were formed anew; then the momentary peace which they bestowed was chased by the remembrance of Mr. St. Clair's supposed unworthiness, and by all Lady Davenport's plausible and insidious reasonings. Then the remembrance of Mary's unhappiness, and of her gentle sorrow, melted his heart anew; then again, the vision of his own possible happiness with her, rose and swept everything resistlessly before it.

Oh! the torture of his unhinged mind, swayed to and fro by every gust of thought and feeling! with just enough of good to make it appreciate the great and beautiful, but not enough to make it grasp and follow them.

Oh! to infuse the righteous feeling, to impart the needed strength! to turn the craving sinner from the things which cannot nourish, and lead him to that Being who alone can soothe and satisfy his soul!

How often does a feeling arise within us similar to that which made the Jews, on the occasion of Lazarus's death, exclaim: "Could not this man which openeth the eyes of the blind, have caused that this man should not die?"—especially when, as in the instance before us, the agents of Satan are turning the souls which are struggling after better things, from the light which seemed about to break in upon them. Faith, however, bids us keep silence; and even here below, often are we permitted to see the end of these things, and to feel how well our God has ordered them all. Often when we would have cried: "Oh! snatch them—snatch them from the danger!" we have lived to see that that lesser danger has saved them from a greater—that striking on the rock has kept them from the whirlpool;—that stumbling on the stone, snatched them from the precipice! "Whoso is wise, and will consider these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

CHAPTER XLVI.

All hail November ! month of storm !
 Thy lowering clouds, thy gloomy sky,
 Are all more fitted to this fever'd eye,
 Than spring's gay form !
 Welcome thou season of despair ! I bare
 My burning forehead to thy blast with joy—
 Yon little flower that blooms the last,
 Haste to destroy !
 Oh ! would that High, that pitying Power,
 That arms the blast to crush that flower,
 So lay me low ! G. W. C.

CAPTAIN NORMANTON rose the next morning without having once closed his eyes. During the live-long night he had tossed upon his wretched bed in all the agonies of "a mind diseased," and he now felt dejected, humiliated, miserable !

Humbling as the sense of weakness is to any one, to a man of his proud and usually unbending spirit, it was degradation insufferable.

Curious it is, that however imperious and domineering a spirit may be, it almost invariably meets in life with some other, beneath whose tyranny it, in its turn, crouches and bends. That so gentle a creature as Mary Sydney should suffer beneath her father's caprices, was not to be wondered at ; but he, with his selfish arbitrariness, was tyrannized over by Captain Normanton, while the stern nature of the latter shrank beneath the sarcastic jests and bold determination of his sister.

He looked ill when he joined her that morning, and scarcely spoke during breakfast. She felt uneasy ; but not choosing to show that she was so, talked gaily and rapidly on indifferent subjects. At last, in a light tone, she asked him whether he had decided on going to Portsmouth that day or not.

"It is too late now," he replied gloomily. And rising, he took up his hat and left the room.

"Sigismund !" she cried, opening the door and calling after him.

"Well."

"You are going out I see ; but will you call for me before you go to General Sydney's—if you mean to go there at all—for I wish to see them—and shall be glad also to see a little of you, which otherwise I do not seem very likely to do."

Captain Normanton felt the implied reproach, but had no heart to speak words of affection which he could not at that

moment feel. He muttered an unwilling assent to her request, and left the house.

The day was a perfect contrast to what the last had been—cold and gloomy, with gusty winds and lowering clouds; but it was all the more in accordance with his feelings, and he seemed to brave its severity with morbid pleasure. He went to the high down above the town, and walked there for hours, unable to calm his spirits, or resolve as to what course he should pursue. He felt half mad with the tumults of his mind; and cursed the chance, as he thought it, that had brought his sister there at that juncture, to

“Silence the nobler beatings of his heart,”

and rouse again all the selfish feelings within him; and as he felt how different the aspirations of his soul then were from what they had been the night before—“from what height fallen,”—he longed to bury life, soul, sensation, everything—in the dark, unrestoring grave.

“Would I were dead—annihilated!” he passionately exclaimed; “that I might at least have rest!”

(“To die;—to sleep;—

To sleep! perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come!”)

Unable to endure any longer the tortures of his mind he rushed down the hill, and infatuatedly sought her again whose evil spells had wrought him all this misery.

“Augusta!” he exclaimed, throwing himself on the sofa, “I am utterly wretched.”

“My dear Sigismund,” she replied in unfeigned trouble and with somewhat of contrition, “what has occurred afresh to disturb you?”

“Nothing,” he exclaimed vehemently; “but I am tortured, and feel from the difference in my heart now and what it was last night, that the thoughts I then had were from heaven, and these from—hell.”

“Sigismund!” she exclaimed, greatly offended at his words, “you forget I think what you are saying.”

“No, I do not, Augusta! I know that all you have said was from love to me, and I am not ungrateful; but it was most indisputably suggested to you by the enemy of *my* peace at least.”

“Very well, my dear brother, it may be so; I do not pretend to be infallible, and I may be—unknowingly certainly—a tool in Satan's hands, as you civilly imply, Still if you perceive the cloven foot and peaked horns so distinctly, I cannot see why you should not set about avoiding them, What hinders your fol-

lowing the inspiration of the gods which you were favoured with last night through 'Harry Mercury' I suppose, on yon 'heaven-kissing hill,'—and casting yourself at the feet of your 'lady-love,' and resigning your title-deeds to—'nothing'—into her fair hand? then flying, galloping, steaming after her faithful lover, and bringing him back to her with triumphant magnanimity—if he will come. I dare say you would overtake him by a cross-cut, by the time he had reached Vigo—where, if he has a complaisant commander, you will doubtless find him, having put in for a few days, or hours at least. You might then have ample time for a pleasant, confidential interview; and if any very knotty point should occur, you could take Donna Mercedes into your counsels, and possibly profit considerably by her accurate knowledge of his character."

"Augusta! I really hardly know you."

"Sigismund! I really hardly know *you*."

"I dare say not!" he exclaimed with reckless misery; "I hardly know myself. Fool—fool that I am!"

"No, my dear brother, you are not that," said Lady Davenport, altering her manner in a moment; "but just now your mind is overset to an extraordinary degree—and I was wrong, and most unkind to laugh at you. I do not certainly understand your feelings, or see why you should be so very unhappy; but that you are so, ought to be enough for me—more, much more than enough." And she took his hand, and put it fondly to her lips.

Captain Normanton retained hers in his agitated grasp, and pressed it convulsively from time to time, as strong emotions swept across his heart. At length he said:

"I do not wonder, my sister, that you hardly, as you say, know me, for I am a fearfully different being to what I ever was before. I am not a boy now, yet never till now have I felt the slightest attachment to any woman in existence; and possibly the feelings which in most men expend themselves, first here, then there from early youth, have accumulated in my breast till at last their torrent has become overwhelming. I feel that it has borne down everything before it; my whole being seems swept away by its mighty force. I had never even tried to stem its power till last night—I had been its victim, its slave, its wretched, wretched slave!—had given myself up to it, till I had peace neither day nor night. I hated St. Clair, and felt a determination to succeed against him. Miss Sydney had ever treated me coldly, repulsing my feelings in every way, and that I think had roused my pride, as much as her wondrous fascination had enchained my love. But yesterday, her deep unhappiness smote me to the heart—for I felt it was all my work; and yet, though she had more reason than ever

to hate and detest me—for I had acted by her in a way that I cannot now bear to think of—yet she was kinder to me than ever before; and when she spoke so gently, and raised her tearful eyes so patiently to mine—pride, harshness, all, gave way, and that struggle against myself began which I had never felt before. My conduct seemed to strike me in a new light; and I who had fancied I was studying her happiness as much as my own, saw myself suddenly the selfish, selfish wretch I really was. I cannot describe the storm within me when I left her; till at last a sudden strength seemed given me, and I tore the hateful passion from my heart, and resolved to give up everything. Oh, the peace, the happiness of that hour!—words of earth cannot describe it! Truly can I say that it was the only hour that had not been agony to me, since the first in which I ever saw her. The weight of a universe seemed lifted off my breast! Ah! if heaven has greater joys in store than what I then felt, they must be great indeed! You know what succeeded—doubts, cold reasonings were brought forward—and selfish love resumed its fatal power. Rest I had none last night; and all to-day have I been torn by contending emotions. I have felt mad—vile—miserable! Oh! you can never know what I have suffered.”

“Why, dear Sigismund,” said Lady Davenport soothingly, “I have never indeed felt what you seem to have done; but still I cannot bear to see you suffer. I have perhaps never really loved—I mean in this way—though I was very happy with him who is gone. In truth I never felt the want of any love but yours—that was all the world to me, my brother!”

And she threw her arms round his neck, and burst into a passion of tears. Captain Normanton pressed her convulsively to his heart, while his own tears burst forth as from a riven rock.

“Augusta!” at length he said, “I can never thank you enough for all your love for me; yet I feel—forgive me that I say so—that I should have been happier had I followed my first impulse last night.”

“Perhaps so, dear Sigismund,” she replied gently. “One nature cannot always understand another, and so I may not have given the best advice. Still I do not see that any irremediable ill has been done by this little delay; you can send your note to Miss Sydney this afternoon, and you can write to Mr. St. Clair. Though still—I cannot help saying it—I would not I think do so, till I had really found out a little more about him, and seen whether he was really worthy of her or not.”

“Ay, there comes that fatal doubt again, to palsy my very heart!”

“Well! let us wait a little and see.”

"I have no power of 'waiting' in me, Augusta!" he exclaimed impatiently; "I cannot stop, and consider, and observe, and think,—I must do,—I must act, and if I do not throw all my energies into St. Clair's cause, I must—I cannot help it—I must throw them into my own. It is vain for me to attempt to school my nature, I cannot now act or feel with moderation. The volcano within me must have vent in one direction or the other."

"I will say no more then, Sigismund," replied Lady Davenport; "except that I certainly cannot advise you to throw all your energies, as you say—blindfold, into uniting Miss Sydney to a boy whom I believe to be fickle, and unprincipled, and who might some day choose to abandon her and break her heart: further I will say nothing. But now let us go, and call at General Sydney's. A visit there may help us perhaps a little to a conclusion."

Well had Lady Davenport said that she "could not understand why her brother should be so very unhappy." An outward and visible misfortune she might have entered into—and kindly; but of the hidden struggles of the inner life—of the agony of the soul which sees its loftier aspirations torn down and trampled in the dust by the remorseless power of determinate selfishness—of those things she had no conception. They were storms which swept through a higher, sublimer region than any she had ever dreamed of and therefore were incomprehensible to her; and while her brother's mind was tossing tumultuously on the waves of contending feelings, she was wondering at him, and watching him with a sentiment of pity, which though it could not but be kindly towards one she loved so well, would in any other case have become a feeling of infinite contempt.

Well too had she calculated on the effect of Mary's presence in the visit she had proposed; and when she saw with what devotion her brother's whole spirit bowed before her, and observed too the gentle kindness of her manner to him, she congratulated herself sincerely on the course she had pursued, and felt convinced that with a little judicious management, Mary's mind might soon be weaned from her absent lover, and be brought to answer to the feelings of one so completely and so touchingly devoted to her.

"I will but write to Sangrove," said Captain Normanton on their way home, "and ask him once more the full particulars of that affair; and if then I feel St. Clair to be really unworthy of her, I will do all you wish me, my dearest sister."

CHAPTER XLVII.

I have always thought the uninterrupted and peaceful voyage of a slave-ship—some *Santa Trinidad*, or *Maria de la Gloria*—the most wonderful problem in the whole world. On it goes, a thing beautifully constructed for its purpose—hundreds of human beings packed in indescribable agony within it—the porpoises gamble round it—light breezes fan its sails—the water parts lovingly from its well-shaped bows. In truth, the powers of nature, sublimely indifferent to right or wrong, epicurean divinities in their way, refuse no aid to this dark devilish thing as it skims gracefully over the waters; and, if it escape our cruisers, the *Santa Trinidad* lands half, or two-thirds of its original live cargo, and is considered to have done a good stroke of business! Truly the apparent silence of God is the most awful thing the sun looks down upon!—*Letter (for private circulation) by the Author of "Friends in Council."*

WHEN Mr. St. Clair had received the little note that Mary sent him by Mr. Bruce on the evening of his departure, his mind felt relieved of a load of anxiety; and after writing a few lines to her in return, he took leave of his mother, and set out on his return to Portsmouth, with a more cheerful heart than he could have believed possible. He felt the infinite kindness of God in so graciously soothing Mary's first moments after their separation, and that proof of his love served as a "stepping-stone to his faith," to enable him to commit her with a more complete trust to His care, who is "tender as a nurse among her children."

A little delay occurred in the sailing of his ship; and though the continual expectation of having to go prevented his venturing again to leave Portsmouth, yet still he felt it an immeasurable comfort to be where he could hear from Mary, and write to her every day.

It was a great happiness to him also being with Mr. Bruce and Don Fernan, between whom he was most glad to observe that a strong affection subsisted. His hope as respected Donna Mercedes made this a subject of great interest to him, as he thought that at some future day it might forward the accomplishment of what he so much desired; and he was glad of it too for their own sakes, for he could not but observe that their intercourse was a source of mutual improvement to them—Don Fernan's polished manners, and consideration for the feelings and pleasure of every one around him, being not without their happy influence over Mr. Bruce; while the clear religious views and ardent spirituality of the latter produced a powerful effect on the heart of the other. He was in hopes that Mr. Bruce would have

accompanied Don Fernan back to Spain, but he was unable to leave England at that time; and the young Spaniard, preferring returning with a pleasant companion to making the homeward voyage alone, accepted the offer, made by the captain of Mr. St. Clair's ship, to give him a passage back in his vessel.

In about a week's time they set sail, and after a short and favourable passage arrived safely at Vigo. The weather being calm, the Captain consented to lay-to there for a few hours, that Mr. St. Clair might accompany his friend on shore, and get a glimpse of the Marquis Villa Hermosa's family.

The meeting was most pleasant; and the young sailor was touched to the heart by the warm, enthusiastic welcome he met with. He was delighted too at seeing how far more cheerful Donna Mercedes appeared than when he had last seen her; and a few words that she said to him proved that it was her increasing love of God, and trust in his infinite compassions, that had effected the change. He besought her to pray earnestly for that spiritual heart which God delights to dwell in, and begged her to encourage her brothers also to study constantly the Holy Scriptures. He had brought her out some of the most excellent of our modern books of religion as presents from himself, and some also which had been intrusted to him for her, as a 'remembrance of former pleasant times,' by Mr. Bruce. She received them with silent gratitude; and though her heart quivered for a moment at the mention of her cousin's name, yet could she lift it up with unspeakable thanks to God that there existed between them now a holy bond which could never be destroyed.

All his friends accompanied Mr. St. Clair to the port when he had to embark again; when, taking the warmest leave of them, he was soon again dancing lightly over the waves, whose wrathful waters had once so nearly been his grave.

The ship bounded on, leaving winter behind, and gaining each day a milder air and brighter sky. The Captain was a kind-hearted, good-natured man, but rough and uncultivated, and could ill replace Captain Seymour to Mr. St. Clair. In some of his old companions, however, he took a great interest, especially in Edward Somerville, whose attachment to him was beyond all bounds, and for young Battersby also he felt a sincere regard.

At length they reached the fatal coast of Africa, the theatre of so many crimes, and so many sufferings!—the beauties of whose natural productions are so fearfully contrasted by the hideousness of the deeds which human atrocity was there continually perpetrating. Spite of its charms, the very earth seemed

stained with the blood of the victim, and the fragrant air loaded with his groans.

They had not been long there before they chased, and after a desperate struggle captured a slaver; and the horrors that met their view when they took possession of it were beyond conception—too appalling to be described here.

“The Angel of Mercy stoppeth not to comfort, but passeth by
on the other side,
And hath no tear to shed, when a cruel man is damned.”

CHAPTER XLVIII.

There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mask of virtue in his outward part.

SHAKESPEARE.

IMMEDIATELY on his arrival at the hotel after his visit to General Sydney, Captain Normanton wrote to Mr. Sangrove concerning Mr. St. Clair; and that unworthy young man, gathering from the unintentional tone of his correspondent, that no particular desire for a favourable account was felt, exaggerated that which he sent as much as possible, laying stress upon everything that could in any possible way criminate Mr. St. Clair.

This letter completely decided Captain Normanton. He persuaded himself now, that it would be the height of wickedness to suffer Mary Sydney to sacrifice herself to so unworthy a being, and he determined to put forth all the energies of his strong will and stern nature to persuade her to give him up, and to accept of his own devoted affection instead.

Lady Davenport was enchanted! All her best, and her worst qualities were brought into lively action, and an object set before her which she thought worthy of all her exertions. She was almost astonished herself at the success of her manœuvres and at the extent of her influence over her brother; and she determined now, that he should not be suffered for one instant to waver in his resolution, or relax in his efforts.

Her penetration had, however, been quite at fault with regard to Mary Sydney's character. The sweetness and gentleness of manner which was so peculiar a charm in that graceful girl, and the almost languor which at times stole over her when her heart was sad, had made her fancy that she was one of weak nature and pliant will, who might easily either be led to compliance or compelled to submission. Mr. St. Clair away also, she thought that his influence might soon lose its power, and her brother's

devoted love subdue her heart; whilst the charms of fortune glittering before her eyes might ensnare her young mind, and her father's strong wishes insure success at last.

The first point that she set before her was to get the Sydneys away from Mrs. St. Clair, and this cruel purpose she determined to effect as soon as possible. Her attentions were most assiduous to the poor old General; and assuming a playful little peremptory way with him, she soon made him as much a slave to her as he was to her brother.

She soon succeeded in convincing him that the house he was then in would not be fit for him during the severity of the winter frosts, and as easily persuaded him to let her undertake the procuring another, which she promised should be more suitable in every way.

No advantages, however, could make up to Mary for her separation from Mrs. St. Clair. Her spirits seemed quite to sink when she found it was determined on; and she felt as if there now lay nothing before her for years but a sad perspective of sorrow and persecution.

Naturally poverty would have been a great trial to her, for she was fond of, and formed for all the refinements and charms of life. But she strove to be thankful for what she had, and not to repine at what she had not, and the animated pleasure too, of working for her father, had a most felicitous effect upon her spirits; and though at times she might be wearied with her exertions, yet she could not but feel that they were blessed to her in many ways.

"Poverty," says Frederica Bremer, "is not always a destructive, suffocating weight; it is frequently—especially with lively spirits—like pressure upon springs of water, which causes them to leap up in strong and lively jets!" So it was with Mary.

Of late, however, resources had flowed in, which obviated in a great measure the necessity for her own efforts. Within the last few months she had received frequent remittances of money, to an amount which, in their impoverished circumstances, was considerable. They were sent anonymously through the post, and great care was evidently taken to prevent any possibility of their being traced to the donor, some being put in at one post-office, others in another—the halves even of the same notes being frequently sent from opposite directions of the kingdom.

At first she had not liked to make use of what flowed in through so strange a channel; but her father had had no such scruples, and for some little time, therefore, they had been enjoying comforts to which Mary at least had long been a stranger.

She had at first imagined it was to Captain Normanton that

they were indebted for these considerate and delicate ministrings; and irksome as was the idea of lying under any obligation to him—and much as she would have preferred that her Heavenly Father should have sent His gifts through any other channel—yet she could not but feel grateful for his kindness, and touched by it. To thank him was, of course, impossible; but her manner became insensibly more and more gentle to him, so that, enchanted with the change, his hopes rose high, and he felt a delighted confidence that her mind was beginning to incline favourably towards him.

She soon, however, found that she had been in error. One evening, when both Captain Normanton and Mr. Bruce were with them, a somewhat similar circumstance which had taken place elsewhere, was accidentally mentioned. Mary looked at Captain Normanton; but all was as still and calm in his countenance as usual. Not so however was it with Mr. Bruce; his colour instantly rose to scarlet, and rising in much confusion he began busying himself with something at the other end of the room. The truth was revealed in a moment!

It was indeed he who had thus secretly supplied the wants of her he loved. The idea had been suggested to him, unintentionally, by Mr. St. Clair, in that conversation which, it may be remembered, they had had together some time before, when walking to the Admiralty; and when he saw the appearances of poverty which there were about the small half-furnished cottage at Hollington, he instantly carried it out in the noble and delicate manner that has been described. Mary was excessively touched; though her deep sense of gratitude was accompanied by a pang of severe sorrow at so great a proof of devotion from this generous young man. She longed to speak to him, and express all she felt; but a thousand reasons made it impossible. She could not, however, prevent herself from being unusually cordial as she took leave of him that night; while the strong contrast which his conduct presented to that of Captain Normanton, brought back again much of her former cold and distant manner towards the latter.

Sensitive as the mercury in the thermometer, to every variation in her looks and tone, he instantly felt this change; and Lady Davenport, who was of the party, observed it also. Nor did she fail to remark at the same time, the unusual kindness shown to Mr. Bruce; and imagining that it might arise from some secret understanding between them respecting Mr. St. Clair, she felt the urgent necessity of separating Mary from this dangerous friend as well as from Mrs. St. Clair. She therefore resolved that their removal should take place as soon, and with as little warning as possible—determining also to keep it a pro-

found secret where she intended to take them; smilingly professing "that she did so, in order that the perfection of their little domain might in every way be a surprise to them."

There was yet one more stroke of policy—the most cruel perhaps of all—which she determined on; and that was the getting rid of the faithful Susan.

A more ruthless deed she could scarcely have conceived, and she feared it might prove a difficult one; for not only was Mary exceedingly attached to her, but the old General was so used to her ways, and she to his, that it seemed as if it would be impossible almost to persuade him to part with her. Nothing, however, daunted Lady Davenport when once she had taken a thing in hand; and very soon an occasion offered itself of prejudicing the poor girl in her master's opinion, of which she made most prompt and wicked use.

She had overtaken her on her way to the post one day with some letters; and being really good-natured, had offered—as it was raining fast, and she was in the carriage—to take them there for her. The faithful girl however declined the offer, having one for Mr. St. Clair, and not feeling sure that her young mistress would like that to be given into Lady Davenport's hand. She pursued her way therefore spite of the rain; and Lady Davenport, suspecting the reason which made her so ready to brave "the pelting of the pitiless storm," was more than ever determined to separate Mary from so devoted an adherent.

She was, however, forced to proceed cautiously, as General Sydney's temper was most tenacious; so much so, that in order to obtain from him anything that was desired, it was generally necessary to make him fancy it was entirely the result of his own free will. She had soon discovered this, and had always laid her snares accordingly. From the very first, instead of urging his daughter's marriage with her brother as her own wish, she had assumed it always to be his—appearing to acquiesce, rather than lead in the matter; and her unscrupulous plans, though springing entirely from the dark soil of her own deceitful breast, had always been so artfully infiltrated into his mind, as to make it appear that there first had they taken their rise. He was not so childish, however, as to fancy in reality that all the ideas attributed to him were his own, but he did fancy that others thought them so; and flattered at the deference he supposed paid to him, he was not unfrequently dragged, an unwilling slave, at the chariot-wheels, when he fancied he had the full credit of holding the reins.

"A faithful little maid you seem to have there," she observed—in furtherance of her cruel design—after the post-office affair, "and a most trusty little messenger." And she mentioned the circumstance which has been related.

General Sydney agreed as to Susan's good qualities—indulging himself with an enumeration of them, and enlarging particularly on her attachment to Mary.

"And that attachment is so natural and so beautiful," observed Lady Davenport, "and of course makes her devoted to all her dear young mistress's wishes; so that I do not wonder at her being willing to do anything for her, let it rain or snow or do what it will."

"What! had she anything to do for Mary particularly that day?"

"I am sure I do not know. I never thought of that particularly. But you are always so quick in your ideas, my dear General, while I am so slow!—'*toujours l'esprit sur l'escalier!*' Though really, now that you *have* mentioned it—possibly she might have had something particular—it seemed so very odd her choosing to go on through all that rain! But however, it might have been for some friend of her own, you know, that she had a letter."

"Friend of her own! I'm sure she has no particular friend of her own," exclaimed the General, who thought he must know every thought of Susan's heart.

"It could not have been for—Oh no! our dear Mary is too innocent and too obedient to do anything contrary to her father's commands; and I think you have told me, my dear sir, that you had forbidden her to write any more to young Mr. St. Clair—have you not?"

"Why—no—I don't think I quite did that—I—"

"Oh! I beg your pardon, I thought you had—you are generally so clear-sighted, and so properly determined when once you see the right way of acting; and from what you had said—I thought I saw plainly that you considered it wrong to let her go on in that foolish way with that fickle young sailor, Mr. St. Clair."

"Fickle young sailor!" exclaimed the General, his pale cheek flushed with a glow of displeasure at what he felt to be the injustice of the expression,—"*fickle young sailor!* My Lady Davenport, I would have you to know that you do that young man a great injustice in calling him that. I don't want my girl perhaps to marry him, as they are both so poor; but a stronger love, or greater devotion than he has for her, I never saw in any one in my life—so much so indeed, that I am often in doubt whether I act rightly in trying to break the thing off."

"I beg a thousand pardons, I am sure," said Lady Davenport, "for having said anything to hurt you. I know I am often much too candid and too thoughtless; and my unfortunate tongue is always bringing me into mischief—making me speak the truth too bluntly."

"My dear madam," replied General Sydney, whose spirit was unusually roused—"speaking the truth too bluntly is one thing, and speaking what is not the——"

"Not the truth, you mean, dear General;" with a little joking smile.

"Yes, madam, speaking what is not the truth, is another. But I dare say you spoke carelessly; and you do not know the young man yourself."

"Not personally certainly; but of his character I know more than you think, or than perhaps I wish I did, my dear General," nodding her head in a grave manner. "But I should not of course have thought of saying what I did, if I had not supposed you knew all about. But however the least said is always best."

"Know all about what?" cried General Sydney sharply; his eyes twinkling with angry suspicion.

"Oh! never mind, my dear sir, I should be sorry to say anything more."

"But I must know—I will know. I'm not such an old fool but what I choose to know what goes on."

"My dear General, you may be quite sure that if my brother thought it worth troubling you about, he would certainly have told you; and your sweet Mary too, I think she would not conceal anything—though to be sure there is much to be said in excuse—so natural not to wish to injure. You know we are not all alike, and allowances must be made sometimes. All have not my terrible love of the truth."

"Truth or not, I'll know all about it, my Lady Davenport. Who has business to know anything in this house if I have not?"

Lady Davenport was charmed at having wrought the jealous old man up to the point she desired; and feigning repugnance, and saying that nothing but his positive commands should make her mention the thing, she informed him of the report against Mr. St. Clair, which she was aware that her brother's good feeling had hitherto prevented his mentioning to him.

General Sydney was furious. He would not believe it..

"I do not wonder," sighed Lady Davenport. "My brother says (but then you know he is so very generous and kind), that to look at that young man, it would be almost impossible to believe any ill of him—he is so handsome, he says, and pleasing in manner. And indeed, sir, we must not be hard upon him."

Those very taking qualities, I dare say, make him so much of a favourite—and that is a great temptation, you know. And he is so young too,—we must not condemn him too much.”

“If I thought it possible,” said the old man, clenching his teeth.

“One can’t help thinking it possible, my dear sir, and unhappily knowing it to be so too, for my brother heard it from one who was in Spain with him; and even not being willing, like yourself, to credit it, he wrote to him afterwards, asking all particulars.”

“And he confirmed it?”

“Yes. Let me see—I’m not quite sure—but I almost think I have got the letter here. Yes! here it is.” And she drew it forth from her “sac,” where she had purposely put it.

The General’s hand trembled with rage as he read it.

“The villain!” he exclaimed. “And to pretend to like my child as he did! And yet,” he added thoughtfully, “he must have liked her too, or he could never have wished and begged so much to marry her before he went away.”

“Marry her before he went away!” exclaimed Lady Davenport in real surprise.

“Yes—why your brother, I suspect, knew that pretty well.”

Lady Davenport bit her lip with vexation at the idea of Captain Normanton’s having concealed anything from her; but recovering herself in a moment, she said:—

“Oh, yes! to be sure—how could I forget? That proves again what a poor, weak head I have. But it appeared to me such childish nonsense, that that, I suppose, made it quite escape my mind.”

She then, by sundry other pretended mistakes and forgetfulnesses, led the General on to give her a full detail of all that had occurred; artfully exasperating him to the highest degree against Mr. St. Clair, by affecting to frame excuses for his conduct.

“After all,” she said, “I dare say, my dear sir, he really was sincere to your daughter at the moment—such characters generally are. I do assure you, I cannot suspect him of hypocrisy, though I fear I must of fickleness. A young sailor, you know, is always said to partake a little of the nature of the winds and waves that he has so much to do with, so I feel no doubt that he really did like, first our lovely Mary, then this young Spanish Donna, then again our dear Mary, and then again the other—for I hear he went to see her on his way out, his complaisant captain actually stopping at Vigo in order to let him visit her—a thing unknown almost!”

The General was in a perfect frenzy when he heard this; and so well did Lady Davenport work upon his irritations of all

kinds, that she got him at last to the point she aimed at—the discharging the unfortunate Susan, lest, as she suggested, any further intercourse should be carried on through her medium.

“I am afraid our dear Mary will feel it for a time, poor little thing!” she said; “but you, I am convinced, my dear sir, know so much better what is really good for her than she does herself, that I am sure you are right. As long as she has her to talk to, she will never yield to reason; and though she may perhaps never marry my brother—though as you are so very anxious for it, I should really be glad if she did—yet at any rate it is absolutely necessary, as you say, to prevent her destroying her happiness for ever, by marrying such a ‘girouette’ as this foolish boy.”

The broken-hearted Susan was therefore told that she was to go, the excuse being that in the new house there were servants who must be engaged, and so many could not be kept.

Mrs. St. Clair was indignant beyond measure when she heard of it; and compassionating the poor girl's distress, promised to take her into her own house when she left her beloved mistress,—an arrangement which was far from agreeable to Lady Davenport, but which nevertheless even her arts could not prevent.

To Mary, this stroke was worse even than her dreaded separation from Mrs. St. Clair. The latter was tender as friend could be, besides being mother to him she loved; but Susan had been her life's companion—her sister—and often her wise and energetic counsellor, and bitterly did she weep at the thought of the separation. Nor were her tears wholly for herself; for the unworthy old man her father, they flowed also with forgiving grief, when she thought how he would suffer from the loss of her who was so skilful in her attentions to his wants, so cheerful in her endurance of his caprices, so affectionate in her sympathy with his infirmities.

So overpowering was this blow, and so much did Mary feel the wanton, tyrannic cruelty of it, that weakened as she was by continual harassments she could not conceal the depression that so completely overpowered her, though she strove against it, lest it should grieve her father.

Had Captain Normanton been aware of what was being done, he never would have allowed it, for nothing but what was absolutely needed, as he liked to fancy, for her ultimate happiness, would he have suffered to trouble her. Her extreme grief therefore surprised as much as it pained him, and in vain he sought for the cause. He dared not ask her herself; and his sister, who considered that she was quite authorized in settling

all those minor points without consulting him, answered his anxious questions merely by some slighting reflections on Mary's "little whims and fancies," or by laughing observations on his own "extreme tender-heartedness."

The day of departure at length arrived; and after partings which her peculiar circumstances rendered really agonizing to the unhappy girl, she found herself carried off with her father—she knew not whither—by Lady Davenport, who took them herself in her own carriage.

CHAPTER XLIX.

That sort of kindness which allows the object of it as far as possible to pursue its own plans of happiness, is what makes the difference between gratitude and thanks. It is but a poor kind of generosity to load persons with favours they do not value, and thwart them on the point on which their pleasure depends.—*Display*.

ARRIVED, after a long and wearisome journey, at their new house, General Sydney was in ecstasies at the comforts and refinements with which it abounded; but Mary's heart was too much crushed to receive pleasure at that moment from anything. She observed indeed the admirable taste with which everything was arranged, and could not but thank Lady Davenport for her attention to their wants and comforts; but the dire purpose which she knew was the mainspring of it all, prevented her being able to feel the slightest real gratitude.

Lady Davenport had in fact been quite in her element in making all these charming arrangements. She had a fund of small external goodnaturedness in her possession, which she was fond of bringing to light on choice occasions; and as she now considered General Sydney and Mary quite as her own property, she was as pleased with the occupation of making everything about them nice and pretty, as a lady attached to her canaries might be, to put them in a gilded cage, and canopy them every morning with fresh groundsel and chickweed.

Mary retired to her own room as soon as she could after dinner; and with that dull vacancy which sometimes lays its kindly-quieting hand on the over-wrought spirit, she sat by the fire, watching its flickering flames and dissolving caves of light, in heavy weariness of mind and body.

A voice at the door made her look up, when she saw standing there a harsh-looking old woman, who asked her whether she wished for anything more. She replied with thanks that she did not, and the door closed again.

Roused by this little interruption from her heavy, blank reverie, she strove to feel less sorrowful ; and looking with more consciousness than before round her little apartment, she could not but be struck by the perfect taste which was so conspicuous on every side—luxury seeming to vie with comfort in every arrangement that had been made.

She was seated in the most luxurious of arm-chairs by the brightest of fires ; before which, on an ornamented sort of stand, stood a silver kettle, sending forth its companionable sounds in bell-like chimes as silvery as itself. Everything was light, and bright, and cheerful. The ground of the carpet was white—white too, that of the full-flowing chintz drapery which closely curtained the windows, and which parted across the French bed only to show the glowing rose-coloured silk within.

There was just enough of gilding on the furniture to look bright and rich without compromising good taste ; and indeed it would have been difficult to say what could in any way have been altered without a manifest deterioration in the effect.

Undrawing one of the window-curtains, she looked out into the night. The winter's moon shone with a keen white brightness which dazzled her, surrounded as it was in each pane by a framework of frost-flowers and feathery landscapes, always so beautiful !

She tried to make out the character of the country which surrounded her, for it was dark when she arrived ; but the rimy haze was too thick to leave anything distinct, only that to her infinite delight, she caught from time to time at no great distance the fitful sparkling of water in the moonlight, and the deep shade of massive woods. Their own garden could be more clearly seen, its little flower-beds and paths being traced out by the white hoar-frost ; while the shining laurel-leaves, reflecting the moon's light as in a broken mirror, made all look bright and cheerful. She was glad to see a trellis-work round all the windows of the little bow, and thought how she should delight, when spring came on, in training her passion-flower round one, and other creepers, whose seeds she had brought from that dear old house near Dover, round the others ; and fancied how beautiful it would be, having their rich colours and fluttering foliage as a wreath through which to look at the woods and waters beyond. She looked up again at the pure moonlight which flooded the whole air, and her thoughts rose thankfully to Him whose love was shed abroad in all the earth, and with her glowing soul she "adored the Father of all gentle lights."

But the night was piercingly cold, and she was soon glad to draw the curtains close again, and return to her warm place and

comfortable chair. She stirred the fire, and drew close to it with that enjoyable shiver which knows it is going to give way to the pleasurable sensations of renewed warmth. She felt really cheerful and buoyant; and busy threads of gold and silver began weaving themselves in her mind into a tissue of happy reveries, which, though they would have defied the quickest grasp of imagination to have shaped into anything like form or order, yet were all bright, all happy.

"What signifies it to the bird whether its cage be made of ivory or of reed—and whether it be hung in a palace or a hut?" said the devoted Jewish girl, when persecuted to become a Mohammedan.

Mary felt that to her it did signify—very much. To her, as we have said, poverty, but for her pious faith, would have been a very great trial. She had said with truth—when at her first pleasant abode near Dover—that she was happier then than at any former period of her life; but it was the fulness of affection and the delights of companionship which had made her so, and not indifference to the want of former comforts and luxuries. Indeed at that time, excepting as to her power of doing good to others, she could scarcely be said to have felt anything like real privation. Her former almost magnificent wardrobe, some of which had been saved from the flames, provided her with ample means of dressing according to her former fortune; and Mrs. St. Clair's care and good management, and the liberal share of the household expenses which that amiable creature had herself defrayed, had enabled them all to live in a manner far above mere common comfort. But she had sorely felt the difference, when, separated from her mother-friend, she had to depend on her father's means alone for their expenses, and her own slender experience for her household management. Many an hour of trouble and solicitude had she had as to the best mode of doing much with little to do it with; and failing, of course, in her attempts, she had often reproached herself, thinking she was in fault, when in fact it was the inevitable consequence of the things themselves.

Her father's murmurs and reproaches also had been ceaseless; though such had been her care for him, that his complaints were in truth far more the result of peevishness and irritation (aided, perhaps, though half-unconsciously, by a desire of making her weary of her position), than from any real privations he had to endure. Her wardrobe, too, had begun to be exhausted; and she had had difficulty in replacing with the plainest materials, the beautiful dresses which, one after another, had defied even Susan's indefatigable efforts to make them keep together.

Their house, also, had been almost entirely denuded of comforts.

Small low rooms, scantily furnished,—chairs and beds of a consistency which made the proverbial words, "English comfort," a heartless mockery—with winds, which even on the stillest days came whistling in at every crevice, and in stormy weather rushed up the staircase, bearing with them whirls of dust whenever the door opened—and down the chimneys, with volleys of smoke and flames, and blowing up the carpets, so that to walk on them gave a sensation of sea-sickness—such were her comforts!

The walls, too, so hopeless! Chocolate-coloured distemper in the small drawing-room, and whitewash in the bed-rooms; and no power of a nail holding in the plaster, so as to admit of pictures being hung to vary and enliven the scene.

A rather dreary view, too, over a flat common with a meagre line of distance, which, though when lying in blue depth, or flooded by the dim yellow haze of sunset was soft and pleasing, yet under the too common aspect of English skies, wore a hard and barren look—all this was trying to one who had been brought up with surroundings so different.

Yet even to this poor abode had Mary contrived to give an air of comfort, and even of refinement.

Many of the ornaments of her former little morning-room she had placed about with good taste. A few of her glowing sketches lay on the table—bearing the mind a moment to fairer scenes; and fresh flowers were always there, with their sweet scents and bright colouring! Her own dress, too inexpensive as it was, was always so becoming—so perfect in all its little appointments!—her collar so white—her ribbons so fresh—and the cuffs of the "muslin and lace," which had so perturbed her father's mind, so finished and unruffled—her hair too, so glossy—parted on her white forehead, smooth and wavy! Her mere presence in itself was an adornment!

All these little refinements in taste and habits had been observed by Lady Davenport; and with treacherous cruelty, she determined to turn her observations to advantage. She had obtained now more insight than at first into Mary's character. She found she was not the indolent, passive being she had once imagined, but one full of depth and force. If gained to their wishes at all, she saw it must be by her will being changed, and not by compulsion. To change that *will* therefore was now her aim; and in furtherance of it, it was part of her well-matured plan to surround her with all the luxuries and comforts that taste could devise or money procure. She estimated her, indeed, too justly to suppose that the mere bribe of a noble house or splendid fortune would influence her for a moment; but with keen insight into human character, she counted much on the

still, deep effect of habit. It would require no effort, she thought—no sacrifice, to go from a father's poor abode, destitute of comforts—to a similar one with a husband whom she loved; but her refined tastes, accustomed again to be indulged in every way—and lapped in luxury—after having felt, too, what it was to forego it—she trusted that the effort would be too great, the change too revolting, for her to leave it all, and sink again into poverty and privation.

On this strong foundation then, did she build her hopes; and glittering were the webs she wove to catch her victim, and vast the arts she used to wind them round her. On her affection for her father, too, she counted much. Would she endure to be the means of taking from him again the luxurious fare and abounding comforts which she knew he enjoyed so much and prized so highly? She thought not;—and full of delight in her anticipated triumph, fond of spending money, and really good-natured as aforesaid, she had had infinite pleasure in decking to perfection the little retreat, which was to be, she hoped, but the vestibule to the greater magnificence she destined for the Sydneys.

CHAPTER L.

The transition from sorrow to joy is easiest in pure minds; as the true diamond when dimmed by the breath recovers its lustre sooner than the false.—J. P.

WHEN Mary awoke the morning after her arrival, she saw the maid busy in lighting her fire. The sight of her recalled the thought of her poor Susan, far away! and she turned her face to her pillow and wept. A pleasant voice, however, soon claimed her attention, asking if the curtains should be undrawn; and, looking at the speaker, she was relieved by seeing that she was young, and of a bright and cheerful countenance—for she had feared meeting again the countenance of the harsh old woman she had seen the night before.

This little circumstance, slight as it was, had a cheering effect on her spirits; and the glorious golden light which streamed into her room when the curtains were withdrawn, aided still further in that good work. She rose the moment the maid was gone, eager to look out and see whether what surrounded the house was as perfect as the house itself. The view was indeed most beautiful; but she was surprised to see that they were situated actually in a park belonging to a magnificent house

which was at no great distance—the wall, and high trees of their own garden forming the boundary between them. A mis-giving came instantly over her mind as to whose the place was; and such a sickness of heart did it produce, as prevented her for a moment from enjoying the beauty of the scene. For a moment only, however, for it was too beautiful not soon again to claim and obtain the admiration it deserved.

A vast extent of richly-wooded country lay stretched out in dreamy stillness; with an outline so distant and unbroken as to give almost the idea of its being the ocean,—a mellow haze, the effect of the sun's warmth on the rimy air, floating tremulously along the soft horizon. The near ground was broken and undulating; and deer rested amid the brown and withered fern, or were taking their "morning fill" at the clear lake whose waters Mary had seen the night before sparkling in the moon's ray. Now they slept tranquil and golden beneath the sun's first light; while thick masses of wood lay still in darkness, excepting where the outer trees caught a few bright rays, or where thin lines of sunshine rushed in between the tall trunks, and lighted up glitteringly the wet leaves and emerald moss. Flocks of sheep lay tranquil and undisturbed by the stirring look of life which seemed to pervade all else, while herds of cattle were grazing amid the deep pastures, or curling their rough tongues round the long grass which grew beneath the trees.

The beautiful frostwork on the windows was growing indistinct in its outlines; and trickling waterdrops began to show how quickly a few warm rays could overcome the cold of hours.

Sweet emblem of the power of love, whose smile
Can melt our hearts, so hard and cold erewhile.

Mary stood in perfect enchantment! She threw up the window. The air was too bright to feel cold, though it had that frosty smell which speaks of winter, yet is so pleasant and animating. The song of many birds was heard, "mavis and merle were singing," with their smaller contemporaries, robin and wren, accompanied too by the deep cawing of the rooks, myriads of which were coming from distant fir-woods where they had taken up their rest at night, and now were dropping down in elusters on the high trees in the park where, as nurselings, most of them had swayed to and fro in the last March's stormy winds, and where they purposed to rear their own young in the spring that was soon to come. Everything was beautiful to the eye, the ear, the scent! Would it had been so to the heart!

And this was Captain Normanton's—for of that Mary felt convinced. She had often heard Lady Davenport speak of the magnificence of her brother's place—and this then was it! She

sighed with a passing regret as she felt how she should have liked it to be hers—for her mind had resumed its natural place amid the great and beautiful of art and nature, and she felt how delightful, how congenial they were.

She turned to dress herself; but when intending to put on what she had worn the day before, she found it gone, and in its place, a dress of newest fashion, bright and light, rich and gay, yet warm and suited to the season, was laid out for her. She did not like putting it on; but the other was quite gone, and she could not appeal to strange servants about it. It fitted to perfection—for Lady Davenport had secretly possessed herself of one of hers to have it made by. She surveyed herself in the long glass that stood near the window, and thought she had never looked so well!

"Would that Wilfred could see her!" But she would tell him all,—describe all to him in the letter she would write that day. She thought of him with unalterable love, but on that bright, bracing, glorious morning, she could not be sad!

She went down to her solitary breakfast, and there again she had all to admire—the beauty of the china and everything, and of the little morning-room where it was all laid out.

She was busy afterwards, looking at the engravings and pictures which adorned the walls, when the door opened gently, and Lady Davenport looked in, with a face so beaming, it was not to be resisted.

"May I come in?" she said. Yet she waited not for an answer, but advanced with a cordial hand held out to Mary.

Mary could not but return the smile she gave, it was so fascinating! It was the first smile Lady Davenport had ever won from her, and her hopes rose high.

"You have slept well," she said; "I need not ask you that."

Mary said she had; and was beginning with blushing embarrassment to thank Lady Davenport for all her kindness,—her dress, and all—when she stopped her with light good-humour, saying:

"Not worth mentioning, my dear. But now, will you come and take a walk with me? I long to show you some views that I think you will like, and the hot-houses too where these flowers" (the glowing products of other climes which filled the vases), "came from. Will you come?"

"I think my father would like to come with us, if we waited," said Mary.

"Very well. But however, he could follow if he liked. I have got a garden-chair for him if it is too far; and it is sheltered, and sunny all the way."

"I think it would be best to wait," said Mary, glad of any excuse for delay—for she dreaded meeting Captain Normanton, who she felt sure was there.

"So be it then, Queen Mary! for you shall be perfect Queen here. And now, shall I sit with you till your father comes down? There are your painting things in the next room, and if you like it I will read to you."

They went into the drawing-room,—prettier even than the other, and brilliant with sunshine and all bright things. Flowers again in profusion, a large glass globe, clear as crystal, with gold fish darting about and flashing flames in all directions, and on a small table, by one of the windows, a splendid cage with Mary's own goldfinches in it! On the opposite side a glass door opened on a small conservatory, where bloomed camellias, orange-flowers, Azorean and Catalonian jessamines, coronilla, *Olea fragrans*, *Daphne odora*! things whose very name are fragrance—thrilling one but to think of!

The middle window of the bow was open down to the ground, showing the little lawn and flower-beds, where snowdrops already bloomed, and where innumerable labels, all painted with the greatest neatness, showed what riches the spring would bring forth; while close under the windows, the Russian and Neapolitan violets scented the sunny air, mixed with the fragrant perfume of the calicanthus. At the end of the garden an arched bower was cut, through which were seen the water, the trees, the turfy glades, and the wild ferny ground of the park with its herds and flocks and far distance; all which, flooded as it was with sunshine, stood out like a picture in bright and soft relief from the framework of dark evergreens of which the arch was formed. A light low iron gate closed this entrance.

Mary stood on the step outside the window in greater delight than ever with her new home; and no troubling thought could at that moment find entrance to spoil the pleasure she experienced.

Lady Davenport was enchanted at the admiration she evidently felt; and began to feel more sanguine than ever of the success of her plans.

They went back into the drawing-room.

"And now, what shall I read?" she asked, running her eye over the volumes that were in a little portable bookcase on the table; "one of Monti's fine tragedies?" And she took up a volume, and opening it carelessly, read:

"Il tuo volto, e l'onor mio
Son due nemici,"—

(Thy face and my honour
Are two enemies,—)

She stopped short. The burning blood rushed to her face. Mary's eyes glanced up quickly, and her colour also mounted, as with marked emphasis and nervous agitation she took up the speech.

"Son due nemici che tra lor di pace
Parlar non ponno, e prevalerne un debbe.
Vuoi tu che ceda l'onor mio? che spenta
Sia di me la seconda vita,
E la migliore? Ah, no!"

(Are two enemies who between them
Cannot speak of peace, and one must needs prevail.
Wouldst thou that my honour yield? that in me
The second life—the better—be destroy'd? Ah, no!)

Lady Davenport was excessively confused; but embarrassment could never hold her in thrall for long. In a few moments she exclaimed gaily:

"What an incomparable memory you must have, my dear Miss Sydney, to be able to follow on with any passage in that way. I really think it must have been you I have heard of as being able to 'cap verses' for half an hour together in your sleep. Are you given to those prolongations of intellectual existence during the dark and dreamy hours?"

"No," replied Mary, her eyes bent again on the drawing she was doing, "and I have but little memory at all, unless things bear some particular meaning, or wake some particular feeling. That passage does both."

Lady Davenport took no notice of her last words, but replying to those that went before, she said, with a gratuitous sigh:

"Yes! it is feeling alone that gives to things their point." And she repeated incomparably those incomparable lines:

"And slight indeed may be the things which bring,
Back on the heart the weight that it would fling
Aside for ever;—it may be a sound,—
A tone of music,—summer's eve—or spring,—
A flower—the wind—the ocean—which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound."

Mary's breast heaved with emotion as she listened to those well-known words, always so saddening, but peculiarly so to her at that time. What was there named that did not bring back thronging memories to her? And oh! "The wind—the ocean!" It was a cruel passage to quote, though not meant so—merely thoughtless. But shipwreck-horrors—so lately undergone—rose frightfully before her. She forcibly repressed her tears; but she felt her breath come thick and short, and for a moment a rushing noise and confusion in her head made her fear she might faint. She strove hard to prevent it, her mind struggling like

one in drowning waters, for the mastery. She obtained it at last, and when she could hear distinctly again, she found Lady Davenport talking about a butterfly. It had been invaded it seemed in some dusk corner by a straggling ray of sunshine, and had come out to see if spring had returned upon the earth—fluttering, and fully expecting to get out through the window,—and Lady Davenport was just remarking that “it would find itself mistaken.”

Mary was thankful to find that her momentary distress had not been perceived; and she too looked at the butterfly, and said: “Poor little thing!”

Her distress had however not been unperceived—what was ever lost upon her observant friend?—though no notice of it had been taken. Every one is aware that an emotion is much more easily subdued when one is alone than when there are witnesses, and therefore it is the kindest thing in most cases to take no notice of their painful occurrence. But besides this kind motive for ignoring Mary's trouble—for she really at the moment did feel for her—Lady Davenport instantly remembered how embarrassing it would be for her to show that she was aware of the cause of it; for how could she then act as if she thought Mary's attachment was merely a passing folly—a thing not worth considering?

So she talked of the butterfly—how it fluttered about,—and then of the sun—and what a difference it made when it shone and when it did not, and then of the beauty of the neighbouring park, &c., and there she seemed inclined to stay and expatiate.

The possessor of it, she said, was very kind, and allowed her to walk about his gardens and take whatever she liked; and Mary also might go, she said, and gather nosegays every day if she liked it.

Mary murmured civilly; then wearied by the ceaseless fluttering of the butterfly—flapping up and down the glass with its weak flaccid wings, she got up and put it out into the garden, where, wavering along, it soon disappeared.

“Now that was very cruel, you know,” said Lady Davenport. “It would have been much happier here in the warmth and shelter.”

“It did not think so,” said Mary quietly.

“I dare say not now; but it will before to-morrow, when you will find it frozen to death in the pathway.”

“Better die where it wished to be, than linger miserably here!”

Did she mean the butterfly only?

Lady Davenport thought not; and her brow knit with anger and vexation. Mary saw that it did so, and hoped that she

might say something on the subject, for she wished earnestly to speak to her, that she might clearly explain her feelings and determination, and not leave it in Lady Davenport's power ever to say that she had misled or deceived her.

Hitherto Lady Davenport had pretended, before her, not to be in the least aware that there was anything particular in her brother's attentions, but always talked of him as merely having a great friendship for her and her father, and as being so kind a person that he liked doing anything good-natured for anybody.

Mary therefore could not begin on the subject herself. She had attempted it once; but Lady Davenport had turned on her such innocent eyes,—with a sort of inquiry on her countenance as if she did not understand in the least what she was speaking of—that the words had died on her lips, and she had shrunk back into herself with that sense of shame and discomfort which the sensitive so often experience when forced into contact with coarser and more overbearing spirits.

They were sitting, both of them in embarrassment and discomfort, when General Sydney's voice was heard in the breakfast-room. Mary instantly rose and went to him.

"My dear father!" she said; "down so early!"

"Down! to be sure. Why, who would not be down with such a sunshine as we have here? My dear madam," as Lady Davenport entered, "you have brought us really into the land of perpetual summer. Who ever felt such a day as this in January? And who ever dwelt either in such a fairy palace as this?"

"Not much of a palace, dear General; but I am glad you enjoy it, and hope you may long do so—or at least till you find something better."

And she exchanged smiles with the old man, while Mary was busy making his tea.

"When you have done breakfast," she continued, "I want to tempt you out with me. This best of little daughters would wait for you to come with us though I asked her to go out before; and I am sure she would have liked an early walk,

"Her buskins gemmed with morning dew,"

would you not, Miss Sydney?"

"I preferred waiting for my father," said Mary, as she watched lest too much water should flow into the quaint little old brown china teapot.

Lady Davenport felt provoked that her compliments should make no greater impression on her than they ever did; and she wondered angrily to herself, what there was that could make her so very charming to her brother. But when she saw her a few

minutes afterwards sitting looking at her father with an expression of pleasurable yet somewhat sad affection in her soft serious eyes, she saw how lovely she was, and felt that she might be indeed a creature for whom such a spirit as her brother's could live and die. A choking sensation seized her, and the tears gushed into her eyes, as she thought of what his sufferings would be were he ultimately to lose her, and she determined more than ever that no influence, no stratagem should be left untried to prevent that being the case. She busied herself assiduously in cutting some very thin bread-and-butter for General Sydney to conceal her unwonted emotion; but spite of her efforts, it was observed by her companions. The old man cast fiery glances at Mary, fancying that she had had something to do with it, but she did not observe them—her whole heart was absorbed by Lady Davenport; for feeling always drew forth feeling in her sympathizing heart, and had a murderer wept, she must have wept with him.

She got up almost unconsciously; and going to where Lady Davenport was sitting—forgetful of all her just causes of displeasure—put her arm round her shoulder, and, leaning over her, whispered in a quivering voice:

“Have I vexed you?”

“No, my dear, no,” replied Lady Davenport, smiling, and drawing her down so as to kiss her lovely cheek, “only one is foolish sometimes; and something, I don't know what, came across me for a moment, and——.” And covering her face with her handkerchief she burst into actual tears.

She rose, and went into the other room. Mary walked to the window wiping her own eyes, and greatly wondering what could have caused this sudden emotion in one generally so cold and hard. She knew not that, like Achilles, Lady Davenport had but one vulnerable point, but that to touch that was death.

General Sydney turned round sharply to upbraid Mary,—as a vent to his discomfort,—and in so doing, twisted the tablecloth round his knee, and dragged his plate and buttered toast off the table. The plate went rolling away; the toast, falling to the ground, became the instant subject of fierce conflict between an old cat,—who notwithstanding the frequent raids it made on Mary's goldfinches was nevertheless a great favourite, and who had been sitting on a chair waiting the daily dole of bread and tea she was sure of receiving when breakfast was over,—and Lady Davenport's red and white spaniel, whose attachment to his mistress, though it made him turn his head for an instant wistfully when she left the room, had not been strong enough to draw him from the General's side, where he sat, his figure strung up to the intensest expectation, his eye fixed on the old

man, and his whole soul following his hand as it went up and down between his mouth and the plate.

Every one knows what it is when cat and dog quarrel! But now, to those ordinary sounds, were added the ravings and screamings of the General, who, distracted at the noise, and irate at the loss of his toast, had jumped up, stamping about in a fury of irritation, and flapping, first the dog, then the cat, with his napkin.

The cat flew up to the top of the bookcase. The dog, after a successful foray in which he carried off all the toast, retreated a moment under a chair to devour it; then rushing to where the cat was perched on high, made several quivering leaps into the air in hopes of reaching her, but always falling down on his back, he contented himself at last with pacing backwards and forwards before the bookcase on his hind legs, barking ceaselessly in the shrillest treble—the cat, with rounded back and tail curled up, looking down upon him from her place of refuge with deep growling purr.

Mary laughed till she could scarcely stand, all the more because the General's excessive anger made her endeavour to prevent it; and he had turned round wrathfully towards her, when he saw Lady Davenport standing in the doorway, also in fits of laughter, and wiping her eyes both for grief and mirth.

"Really, my dear sir," she said, advancing and shrieking anew with laughter when she began to speak, "I am quite ashamed my ill-mannered Zitti should have behaved in such a way. Here, Zitti! Zitti! Zitti!"

But Zitti was beyond all powers of reasoning; and refusing to answer to his inappropriate name, continued his shrill barking till his mistress came, and taking him by his dangling front paws, danced him off to the breakfast-table again, when by dint of lumps of sugar, and soothing admonitions, he was at length reduced to quiet upon her knee. The cat cautiously remained in her high security, so peace was at length restored; and as Lady Davenport had joined in the laughter, General Sydney could not scold Mary for having laughed too, so he sat down again, though rather moodily, to his half-cold breakfast.

"Well!" said Lady Davenport, cheerfully, "a better ending than beginning: good, sensible laughter, instead of foolish, senseless tears. But now, my dear General, you must positively have some hot toast. I cannot allow my naughty dog to take all the good things of this life from you, as well as from poor puss. There! Miss Sydney has rung you see; and now she will go, like a dear good girl, and put on her things, and be ready when you have done to go with us to my—to Lorrington. Won't you, my love?"

Mary went, with an unwonted cordiality in her heart towards Lady Davenport. To have wept—even to have laughed together—was a bond of union, an evidence of sympathy, and it is that which attracts. As she walked up-stairs, how much she wished there were no deeper feeling in question, and that she could regard Captain Normanton and Lady Davenport as friends merely, for she felt just then as if she could have liked them both.

On entering her room another surprise awaited her, for on her bed lay a new and beauteous pelisse! It was of spotted amaranthe silk, trimmed with chinchilla,—according to the pretty fashion of those days, when the draping folds of the cloak had not yet been adopted, merging all differences of form and figure—offering a friendly screen to some who might need it, while it defrauded others of their due meed of praise and admiration. A small black velvet bonnet, meeting under the chin, of something of the “Marie Stewart” shape, completed this quiet and lady-like costume; and half-pleased, yet half-vexed again at this fresh pouring forth of obligations upon her, she arrayed herself in it—adorned and adorning—and went down into the drawing-room.

If her father had admired her morning dress, he was now in perfect enchantment, and Mary felt embarrassed even at his praises, as he made her stand before him that he might fully admire her. She wished to speak her thanks; but Lady Davenport, putting her finger on her smiling lips, and giving her a kind approving little nod, left the room to see to the arrangements for General Sydney's chair, when finding they were all completed, they set forth on their walk.

They went out of the garden-gate, and along a pathway cut from thence to the house at Lorrington. The day continued bright and fine; and, sheltered from the wind, the sun felt actually hot. A light haze still rested over the country, adding greatly to its beauty; making the different ranges of woods and hills stand out distinctly, yet blending them all in one soft gleamly light.

The house was in the handsomest Italian style, suited to the undulating nature of the ground which lay around, though it itself stood on a fine natural *plateau* of land. In front was a long terrace with a low stone parapet, descending by steps to an Italian garden, whose beds were bordered with handsome mouldings of carved white stone. Many of them were quite empty then; but they were raked, and smoothed with such care and nicety, that they were quite pleasant things to look upon, and one knew that they would in due season be masses of brightness and beauty. Beyond the garden, shrubberies and lawns spread down to the water's edge;—water, on whose still bright surface the clouds

were pictured so perfectly, as "almost to leave the doubt which were the heaven, and which the earth."

With other companions Mary might indeed have had that doubt, as she looked around upon those lovely things—but not then. Yet nature and its perfect beauty were so very enchanting to her, so truly a part of herself, that, but for one haunting thought, she could even then have almost felt in a heaven of happiness. She habitually endeavoured to enjoy the good there was in what was placed before her, and she was rewarded by being generally allowed to do so. Good old John Newton's saying she fully felt the value of: "The evil of yesterday is gone; the evil of to-morrow is not yet come; would it not be well to walk with the Lord by the day?"

Yes! she found that it was well—well to keep ever by God's side; not lingering repiningly in the past, or rushing faithlessly forward into the future, but ever by His side. This was her habitual state of mind—a duteous, and so a happy one. But yet she could not always subdue her griefs, she was so young, so clinging, and tender beyond conception, and of an ardent imagination, and so much tried. Therefore at times her spirit would fail and her heart sink within her. She yearned too so very much for him she loved! But to see him once, but once to hear the sound of his voice!

Oh! it is a sickening thing is absence—a wearying thing to the heart! But God "knoweth whereof we are made, and remembereth that we are but dust," and counts not as sin that craving of the hungering heart, that agony of the thirsting spirit,—no, not as sin, when no murmuring enters in, no anger that the full cup is withheld awhile from our lips. He hears in it only the confiding child's natural cry: "Father! I wish for it so much!"

But Mary felt really happy that day. The sunshine had entered into her breast, for she was at peace with every one.

She could have blessed Lady Davenport for the mysterious tears which had that morning washed away so much of bitterness. She longed to know the cause of them indeed, but they were tears—they were the expression of suffering, and her heart had been melted.

She wandered a little away from the others that her thoughts might be free,—not to pine for those she loved as far distant, but to feel them with her then, to carry about with her unspoiled and untouched the fulness of that great joy—the knowledge of their true and tried affection. She inhaled happiness with the very air that surrounded her, and

"Breathed, conscious of her joy, the native atmosphere of heaven."

One thought however, we have said, occasionally troubled her, and spoiled her enjoyment,—it was the dread she could not divest herself of, of seeing Captain Normanton. She felt perfectly sure that this was his place, and that he would join them there, and therefore, though she wandered away from the others, it was only in the most open parts, lest she should meet him suddenly or alone; and she started even then, if the small bird lighted suddenly on the crisp leaves beside her, or shook the frost-drops from the waxen arbutus-bells, or feathery cedar.

Her father did not miss her at first; but when he got out of his chair to walk on the terrace, and spied her away at some little distance, his wrath arose, and he summoned her back in an angry voice. She was with him in an instant.

“Why must she always be going away? Why could she never stay with him?” he asked in shrill tones of peevishness, spite of Lady Davenport’s soothing little murmurs as he leant on her arm. “Why couldn’t she stay where she ought, and not go wandering about in a stranger’s grounds?”

“Not a ‘stranger’s grounds,’ my dear good General,” said Lady Davenport, arrived at length at the climax of her triumph in the surprise she thought she was going to give to both; “these grounds belong to a very great—I had almost said your greatest friend. They are—my brother’s.” And she glanced towards Mary to gather the effects of her communication.

But Mary showed no surprise, because she felt none; though she was vexed that her colour would rise, when she saw Lady Davenport’s eyes turned towards her.

That wily woman gained a hint from her tranquil yet conscious look, which she was not slow to profit by.

General Sydney stopped short in his walk, and facing round sharply, stood looking into Lady Davenport’s triumphant face with eyes that trembled with the excess of his astonishment and ecstasy. He could hardly believe what he heard.

“It is so, I assure you,” she said, answering his look. “But though you are so surprised and incredulous, our clever little friend here I suspect, has long seen through all my transparent attempts at a little surprise—after the foreign fashion; and she could, I suspect, have said ‘Lorrington’ yesterday, to the post-boys, as easily as I did.”

“Indeed,” exclaimed Mary, with warmth and agitation, “I had no idea where we were, till——”

“Ay, ‘till’—till you ‘had an idea!’ I know all about it! But you don’t like we should think that that classical little head of yours contains too much brain. Yes!” she added, turning to General Sydney, and pretending not to see Mary’s renewed attempts to state the truth, “this beautiful place, and for miles

round—belongs to my brother. He has, you know, one of the largest properties in the county."

General Sydney, forgetting in the extremity of his rapture his usual caution, exclaimed, "Mary! do you hear that?" And disengaging his arm from Lady Davenport's and taking Mary's, he led her on with quick tottering steps, whispering to her (like a child that thinks the favourable moment is arrived when his coaxing will gain its end) all sorts of delights, and hopes, and expectations; till his voice in his eagerness, rose so high as easily to be overheard by the quick ears that were so near.

"How delightful, Mary! no more wretched paltry houses;—quite a palace! How happy you will be!"

"Happy!" murmured Mary—all her bright spirits flown, and turning to him with a sad smile in her full melancholy eyes, "happy!"

"'Gin he whose faith was pledged wi' mine,
Were wrang'd and grieving sair!'"

("Talking of *his* wrongs, *his* griefs," said Lady Davenport to herself. "That is a great step gained—she'll get over that." And encouraging herself with this Rochefaucauldian opinion, she walked gaily on.)

"Pshaw! nonsense!" exclaimed General Sydney to Mary; "never let me hear any more of that folly. 'Wranged and grieving' indeed! As if he didn't make love himself to every girl he met! It's enough to put one out of all patience, with your silly scraps of old songs! 'Wranged and grieving!' Pshaw! nonsense!"

Mary, completely saddened, walked on with him in silence.

"Why don't you answer?" he continued; the sound of his own words ringing it seemed unpleasantly in his ears.

"What can I say, my father?" she replied gently, as a deep sigh involuntarily burst from her.

"What can you say? Why, that you will do as I desire—and as every girl with a grain of sense and feeling would do—and marry a man who has it in his power to do so much for her, and for her poor old father too. If you do not, I swear by all——"

"How beautiful those swans are, pluming themselves on that bank, and reflected so clearly in the water!" said Lady Davenport, taking his arm suddenly, and turning him round to the spot she pointed to. She felt that he was pushing matters far too strongly for good policy; and a somewhat of good feeling too made her indignant that the patient girl should be so harshly spoken to.

"My dear!" she continued, speaking to her with great soft-

ness, "I am sure you will not mind gathering me some of those violets." And she pointed where they lay near the house, basking in purple masses in the sunshine.

Mary had but just reached them when one of the lower windows was suddenly opened, and Captain Normanton issued forth, coming down the steps of the colonnade to the terrace, and advancing towards her. It was but what she had expected, but it was most awkward at that moment. She knew not what to do. She could not advance to meet him,—she could not stand still looking at him as he came up, without advancing—nor could she affectedly look away, or stoop down and begin gathering the violets as if he were not there. She stood irresolute, looking first at the violets, then towards him,—yet courteously, as if showing she was expecting and waiting for him,—then again at the violets and—then he was by her side, and she had turned to greet him.

She did so, with that grace of heart, and gentleness which was so peculiarly touching in her. Seldom indeed had she felt so kindly towards him as at that moment. Her heart had been so completely overcome by her father's harshness, that anything that would have been gentle to her—had it been but the dumb caress of an animal—would have touched the tear-springs in her heart; and she could not but feel also a something like gratitude, that one so richly endowed with this world's wealth, should so completely devote himself and all he had to her. But after the first kind words, she knew not what more to say; and her timidity infecting him, they stood in silence together looking on the bed of violets.

"You would like some?" he said at length. And he stooped to gather them; but his stately figure seemed not formed for such a task.

"I came to gather some for Lady Davenport," she said, accepting those he gave her, while she stooped to gather more. He stood by, watching her; with a world of commotion going on beneath that cold and stern exterior. "Mary there!—in *his* garden,—gathering *his* violets!"

When she rose and turned to take them to Lady Davenport, he followed, walking still in silence by her side.

General Sydney when they met, was animatedly profuse in his admiration of the place, and in his expressions of gratitude for all the arrangements that had been made for their comfort.

Captain Normanton replied stiffly, that "on the contrary, he had to be grateful himself, for his kindness, and his daughter's, in consenting to——"

Lady Davenport interrupted him with something of quickness, and proposed that he should take Mary round by the side of the

water to show her the beauties there, while she stayed with General Sydney in the more sheltered shrubberies.

She was in fact in dread of an *éclaircissement* taking place between the two parties. She had kept it as complete a secret from her brother that General Sydney and Mary were coming to the Park House, as she had from themselves—for she feared that he might not have approved of it; and till his arrival at Lorrington the night before, he had had no conception of it. Being used to maintain a laughing sort of tyranny over him, she had before refused to tell him where she was going to take his friends, assuring him that he should know all in due time; and he, being well satisfied that his dearest interests were in the most affectionate hands, had felt no great anxiety upon the subject. She had, with her usual recklessness of truth, when she informed him that Mary was so near, contrived to convey the impression that it was with her own knowledge and consent,—for she always fancied that in his hopeful moods he was more fitted to please, than when oppressed with fears and saddened by doubts,—and in like manner she had before given the others the idea, that to him they were indebted for all the thousand ministrings to their pleasures and comforts which were so richly spread around, wishing that the thought of him should be associated in their minds with all their enjoyments.

Like most double-acting persons however, she now found herself embarrassed by her own manœuvres, and rather wished she had for once adhered to the truth, dreading that it would some day come forth, unpleasantly.

The Park House was in fact hers for her life. When she became a widow, her father had built it for her, as she loved the scenes of her youth, and was, like her brother, a dutiful and affectionate child; and though she had generally, when he was at Lorrington, lived with him, yet she was one who always liked her own little domicile, where in quiet and privacy she could retire, whenever (not often) she had a fancy for it.

Since her father's death she had not been there; only when the idea struck her, of getting the Sydneys to live there, she had come down to arrange things for them.

To avoid an explanation then with General Sydney, she proposed her brother's walking with Mary; but the next instant she remembered that Mary with her open simplicity, was more likely to reveal the truth even than the General. But Mary relieved her from her anxiety, by saying that she preferred staying in the shrubberies with her father.

Captain Normanton's compressed lips showed his vexation; however as General Sydney had Lady Davenport's arm, he offered his to Mary, which a look darted at her by her father

prevented her refusing. They all walked together for some time, Lady Davenport unusually silent, for she was turning over many plans in her mind by which she could give a colour of truth to her misrepresentations, so as to escape detection. But General Sydney put her into spasms of fear again by saying to Captain Normanton:

"I had no anticipation of anything nearly so pleasant, as the charming residence you——"

"General Sydney was not aware, you know, Sigismund," she hastily interposed, "that we were coming here. I like surprises sometimes. But there are some little fairies so shockingly clever and quicksighted, that to try and hide anything from their bright eyes were quite child's play." And she directed a laughing look at her brother, and then at Mary.

Mary was perfectly conscious of that look, though their eyes did not meet. In her agitation and just indignation at this most false insinuation, she had involuntarily glanced at Captain Normanton. She saw the expression of gratified intelligence with which he returned his sister's significant look and the joy that radiated from every feature, and it struck her to the heart. What should she do? How could she seem to take to herself an observation that might apply to any one? Yet how could she let Captain Normanton retain a delusion so cruel to him, so degrading to herself? She could not do it. She began with trembling boldness:

"I too was ignorant where we were coming——"

"Till," interrupted Lady Davenport, with a meaning expression in her treacherous smile, as she looked at her, and slightly—as if not to be perceived by the others—raised her finger in pretended playful admonition.

"I never——" began Mary again, in great agitation.

"Never mind, never mind," interrupted General Sydney peevishly, "what does it signify, so as we are here."

Mary said no more. She could not make a war of words; and indeed had she spoken another syllable she must have burst into tears. Little as she used to be hurt by her father's unpleasant way of speaking when she thought it only the effect of age and infirmity,—now, when she knew how much his heart was estranged from her, and what meaning there was in all his harshness, everything struck to her heart like a dagger. To have her word doubted too—to have constructions most injurious put upon her conduct—oh! she felt as if her cup of wretchedness were full! Poor child! she knew not then how much that cup could hold.

"But youth bows down to misery in amaze
At the dark cloud o'ershadowing its bright days."

Her extreme agitation, and the trouble of her countenance, could not escape Captain Normanton's observation. He could not resign the hope, the belief, that it was indeed willingly that she had come there, yet he could well understand how she would shrink from the confession—not knowing that her nature was incapable of anything she could not confess. He was too gentlemanlike, however, to show that he observed her distress, but his manner became more than ever respectful and kind; and strange as it may seem, to him she turned at that moment with relief from the others, feeling that she could have spoken to him with a thousand times greater freedom than to either of them. When therefore, he tried to keep rather behind the others in order to shield her from their observation, she did not resist his restraining action; and when they came to a diverging path she herself turned into it, purposing to speak openly to him. She was just beginning to try and do so, when—

"Sigismund!" called Lady Davenport across the lawn. She had perceived their evasion, and had caught the expression of earnest pleading in Mary's eyes as they were raised for a moment to his countenance and his look of troubled feeling, and she knew his weakness—as she would have called it—and dreaded Mary's power.

"It will never do, I see," she said to herself, "to let them talk together now; she will say anything to him, and obtain anything from him."

And perhaps she was right. Mary was all truth; and Captain Normanton had generous moments in which he was capable, as we have seen, of great and noble things.

"Sigismund!" she called again, for he would not hear the first time. He was forced then to stop and turn. "General Sydney would like to see the conservatory."

Captain Normanton sullenly, and Mary with disappointment, turned to retrace their steps back to the old walk. If he could have hated his sister, it would have been at that moment.

They went to the conservatory, which was a beautiful one; and flowers, delightful flowers, for a time exercised their wondrous soothing power over all the differing spirits that were there assembled.

"And none that breathed that scented air,
But had a gentle thought;
A gleam of something good and fair,
Across his spirit brought.

"So prayers in crowded moments given,—
Of tumult, toil, or woe,
Will sweeten, with a breath from heaven,
Our weary path below."

Mary knew well the sweetness of both flower and prayer ; and gently disengaging her arm from that of Captain Normanton, she wandered alone among the lovely things around. Her elastic spirit rose afresh as she went from flower to flower, from scent to scent ; and she felt tempted to wonder how unhappiness could dwell among those beautiful evidences of God's care and love. Captain Normanton did not follow her ; he saw that she liked being alone, and he felt hurt and offended. Yet he noted the flowers near which she lingered longest—and the next day she found them in her own little conservatory.

"You like the roses and the lilacs best," he observed when they met again. "Some people do not like unseasonable flowers."

"I like them," she replied, "greatly for that reason. They bring *their* season to the mind, 'a summer feeling to the heart ;' and summer seems life !"

A cloud came gloomily over Captain Normanton's brow, for he thought of the last year's summer, and of Mr. St. Clair at Mary's window training the jessamine for her. She thought of it too.

CHAPTER LI.

Yea, though utterly on this bad earth ye lose both right and mercy,
The tears that we forgot to note, our God shall wipe away.

Proverbial Philosophy.

DURING all this time Mr. St. Clair was cruising about in southern seas, with their burning days and heavenly nights ; and when he could forget the horrid crimes they were sent there to repress, as well as his own heart-sorrows, he could enjoy the many beautiful things around him : the phosphoric waters, the "rainbow-coloured shells," the splendid flowers, the graceful trees—amongst which most conspicuous was the magnificent *Equisetum filifolium*, which, at the mouth of the Gambier especially, grows to such splendid size, showering down its bright green tresses in long floating masses.

They proceeded after a time to the Bight of Benin, but had not been there long before the fatal nature of the climate began to show itself, and several of the officers and men fell victims to its fearful power.

Amongst them was poor young Battersby. He lingered for some time after the violence of the first attack was past ; but, without vigour either of body or mind, he never rallied, and gradually sank into the grave. It was very touching to see his simple love for Mr. St. Clair, who never left him unless his

duties required it, and who endeavoured to sustain his soul with the strong consolations of the gospel of peace. He would weep like a child when he spoke to him of the love of Christ; and one day, after a conversation on this subject, he exclaimed:

"It is very strange that so great a Being should love me, when none even of my own relations ever did! But it is all as well that they didn't, for they will have no sorrow now when I am dead."

"But perhaps you may not die," said Mr. St. Clair; "you must keep up your spirits, my boy."

"It keeps them up much more to think of dying than of living," said the poor fellow; "for you can't think how I dread returning home. I was always unhappy there; people thought I felt nothing, I suppose, because I was afraid to say anything, but it was one state of torture to me to be kicked about, and called a fool every moment. You have been kind to me now, and some of the others too, and I don't think I could bear it again now as I used. I'd much rather die—I'm of very little good in the world, so don't grieve a moment about me, St. Clair. I'm sure of seeing you again, any how—that's one comfort—and Somerville too; and I hope I may see those at home too, when they are changed. It's wonderful, as I was saying, that God should love one, when one's own flesh and blood does not. But it's a good thing."

"It is a wonder and a good thing too, as you say, Battersby. But don't talk more now, for you get excited; and then when the fever is past, you sink the more."

"I'd rather talk now, because I think I shall not live till to-morrow, so it can't signify. But I should like to go on deck once more, St. Clair. It seems as if one could die freer there than in this hole."

The dying lad was carried upon deck, and laid on his hammock beneath a sail which was hung as an awning to shelter him from the sun's fierce rays. He seemed for a time refreshed. Mr. St. Clair went and sat by him.

"You feel better now?" he asked.

"Cooler; but I'm going fast. I shall die at sunset."

"And are you able, my poor fellow, to place all your hope in your Saviour, Christ?"

"I can't ever quite understand what you've told me about that, St. Clair, for you know I *am* very dull; but I trust Him quite. And one thing I know," and his fever-lit eyes glowed with intense animation, "and that is, that I love Him, and that He loves me, and I'm sure I shall be happy when I'm dead."

"You will, most surely, if you truly love Him."

"Well, then! that I certainly do; and I have tried to do what

I thought He would wish, ever since you talked to me—away there in Spain. It would be hard if I did not, for He is the only Being that ever loved me. You're as kind as kind can be; but I am not worth any one's loving. However, never mind! I shall be happy there."

"You will; and He will teach you Himself all that He has done for you."

"I shall like to learn," he replied.

The languor which always succeeded his burning fits of fever began to steal upon him; which Mr. St. Clair perceiving, he rose to leave him that he might be quiet.

"Come to me again, will you?" he murmured, "before the sun goes down."

He lay tranquil, and in a sort of lethargy for several hours. Towards sunset Mr. St. Clair again went and took his station by him, and Edward Somerville also.

The dying boy was moving restlessly about, but his eyes were still closed. At last he opened them, and looked dully about him; till perceiving those who were near, he smiled and held out his hand.

"I shall soon be gone," he said. "But St. Clair!"

"What is it?" said Mr. St. Clair, bending kindly over him.

"Take this," he whispered—putting into his hand a Spanish dollar; "it is one of those you gave me in Spain. I wanted to have something of yours, so borrowed one of another fellow, and kept this. It was worth a hundred to me! But you take it now—and, if you don't mind, keep it, will you?"

The tears started into Mr. St. Clair's eyes at this simple proof of affection, and for a moment he could not speak. The boy's countenance became quite beautiful with the expression of gratified feeling at seeing his emotion.

"This is the happiest hour of all my life," he said, closing his eyes in placid enjoyment. But soon opening them again, he said:

"I should like to see the sun set."

"You will soon be where there is no setting of the sun," said Mr. St. Clair; "but where Christ Himself is the light of His people."

"Read in those parts of the Revelations, will you?"

"Do you like that best?"

"Yes: what I can understand of it, lifts my heart nearer to God than anything. The twenty-third Psalm I like too. Those green pastures!—those still waters!—no tears,—no sin,—no trouble!"

Mr. St. Clair, much affected, opened the book, and read to him, first the Psalm he wished for, and then those words from

the Revelations: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, or any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The poor lad's features quivered, and the tears trickled from beneath his trembling lids. He feebly brushed them off. Mr. St. Clair grasped his hand kindly.

"Never mind," he said; "they are the last that I shall wipe away." Then suddenly, "Look!" he cried, opening his eyes wide, with a gleam of animation, and pointing to the mast, "the shadow is going up there; when the light is gone, I shall be gone too. God bless you both,—God bless—God—"

His eye was fixed aloft, as if watching for the moment of his dismissal. His companions' eyes involuntarily followed the same direction. The last ray of the sun had joined the universal glow of crimson that suffused the welkin, but the boy's eye still remained fixed on high. His spirit had flown to higher regions still; and the neglected child of earth had found a welcome in the bosom of his God.

Mr. St. Clair closed the poor eyes in sad and silent thankfulness; but Edward Somerville hid his face in his hands, and burst into tears. Sincere was the regret he felt for his companion; and it was with stricken awe also that he saw for the first time the shadow of death pass over the human countenance.

"Don't cry for him," said Mr. St. Clair kindly; "the poor fellow's happy now."

"You really think so? He didn't seem to understand much about Christ."

"He does now, depend upon it, a vast deal more than you or I, Somerville. If knowledge was wanting, love was not, and that is the seal of the Spirit. That last sun's ray saw him in the arms of his Redeemer!"

"What a thought!" exclaimed the boy.

"Think it often, my good child; it is a purifying and a strengthening one."

The body of the dead was sewn up in his hammock, and beneath the light of the stars, that made almost a day of night, it was committed to the deep. It was a shuddering sound as it dropped heavily into the still waters! But they closed again, and soon almost unbrokenly reflected the brilliant southern cross—beautiful emblem! which rested upon the boy's deep grave.

Mr. St. Clair pointed to it.

"It reminds me," he said to Edward Somerville, "of a tomb

I once saw abroad, where at the foot of a cross were written the words : ' Oh ! sacrée croix à tes pieds je repose, et j'espère.' (Oh ! sacred cross, at thy feet I repose, and I hope.) Better however for those who with clearer faith can say : ' A tes pieds, je repose, et je jouis.' " (At thy feet I repose and rejoice.)

And he thought of her whose firm faith had so often cheered and animated his.

The very next morning Mr. St. Clair awoke in all the delirium of the fever. Days and nights passed—weary days and nights—while he lay fluttering between life and death ; and during all that time Edward Somerville never left him, if he could help it—the attachment, which a few kind words spoken beside the green shores of Mount Edgecumbe had planted in his breast, thus showing forth its beautiful fruits on the far coasts of Africa's burning clime. He exposed himself fearlessly to all the infection, though he knew it was said that Mr. St. Clair himself had caught it from young Battersby ; for love mastered fear,—the risk he ran indeed making his feeling of devotion doubly delightful to him.

His assiduous nursing was blessed at last with success ; and after a few weeks he had the happiness of assisting his feeble charge up the Companion, and seating him on the deck to " breathe the upper air again."

" Blest power of sunshine ! genial day !
What balm, what life is in thy ray !
To feel thee is such real bliss,
That had the world no joy but this—
To sit in sunshine calm and sweet,
It were a world too exquisite,
For man to leave it for the gloom—
The deep, cold shadow of the tomb."

" Ay ! " said Mr. St. Clair, when his enthusiastic little companion had finished these lines, " when it is a ' deep, cold shadow ; ' but to God's people it is a struggling upwards into light !

" ' Death gives us more than ever Eden lost.' "

CHAPTER LII.

The buoyant, joyous look ; not contented—but something better than contented—telling a spirit ready to possess, and occupy, and live in, all the mercies of God's bestowing, great and small.—*The Melvilles.*

TRIALS of various kinds continued to harass Mary Sydney. Lady Davenport was constantly misrepresenting her words and actions ; and if the poor girl strove to place things in their right light, she would always, as in the instance that has been mentioned, by some little significant gesture, some “nod, or beck, or wreathed smile,” convey an impression to the others of something more than met the ear, or eye.

“A look may work thy ruin, or a word create thy wealth.”

Of this she seemed fully aware ; and she tried to wind her ceaseless, slender threads round her victim, so as to make her herself believe that she had gone too far ever to recede.

Another source too of deep and disquieting trouble had arisen since her arrival at the Park House : she had not received one line from either Mrs. St. Clair or Wilfred. The latter indeed might have had no opportunity of sending home any letters ; but what could have prevented Mrs. St. Clair from writing ? Letter after letter had she sent, but no answer arrived. This new and great misery,—besides its privation,—filled her with alarm. Could anything have happened ? Death ? She could not meet the thought.

Then all in a moment the fearful idea flashed upon her :—her letters were intercepted ! Horror crept through her veins. Such things she had heard of, but could they occur to her ? Could she be the victim of plots so dark, so diabolical ? Was it not enough that her father's heart was estranged—that her words were falsified—her actions misrepresented—but must she be denied the hearing from those she loved ? Must her letters be opened—her inmost thoughts be intruded into,—the sacred outpourings of her heart to her affianced husband and her mother-friend be made the subject perhaps of rude scrutiny and insulting jest ? It was horrible ! She felt as if in some foul enchanter's power !—as if toils were encompassing her on all sides, tightening their folds, and pressing them nearer and nearer still, till there could be no escape ! To whom could she appeal ? No friend on earth knew where she was. Her father had forbidden her going out by any gate but that which led into the silent solitary park,

so that she saw no one to speak to, no one who might help her in any way. Willingly would she have taken her own letters to the post; the three miles of hard road, had they been piled deep with snow and frost, would have seemed a summer's flowery path to her, could they have secured a communication with those she loved,—those whom she trusted. Oh! the want of that trust!—earth's best treasure,—Heaven's happiness! how deep it cut into her heart!

She thought for a moment of asking the sweet-tempered little maid who waited on her to take a letter herself to the post, but she feared bringing trouble upon her, and felt also ashamed—ashamed for herself and for others too, to mention, or even to betray her suspicions.

"I will wait," she thought, "I will wait,—deliverance will surely come!"

She waited; but it came not—the trial was longer needed. She grew ill in mind and body; and felt almost like the poor, gentle victim in that matchless romance of Sir Walter Scott's, when—surrounded by evil agencies, her intellect and life gave way. When she spoke to God, she was calm; but then, thoughts thronged thickly round again, and the quivering pulsations of the heart returned. She felt as if she could not much longer sustain the load of anxiety and sorrow, and despair almost crept upon her solitary heart.

Day after day dragged slowly on. She herself sent no more letters—she could not risk their being opened—read!—though she had one always about her in case of any blessed opportunity of sending it. She and her father often drove out with Lady Davenport; and it was almost with a frenzied feeling that she saw herself continually whirled past the post-office without having the power to stop or make inquiry. That wooden square in the window, with its narrow, dark, trusty opening! what volumes of peace, what oceans of joy might it not have contained for her! She envied the very beggar in the street who had liberty to put a letter in, or get one out.

She thought sometimes in passing, that she would dare to ask to stop and put her letter in; but terror checked her. She seemed to have lost all nerve, all spirit.

Oh! how often did her own sorrows make her think of Him, of whom it was said: "He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was none;" and she could have wept—and often did, when she thought of the sinless sufferings of one so pure, so holy! sufferings borne for her, frail, weak thing that she felt herself to be,—and in that fellowship of grief there was comfort. His indeed was past;—He had ascended "to His



Father and her Father, to His God and her God."—And hers too would pass!—But when?

Lady Davenport had sent word one morning that she should not be able to see them that day, having much business at home, and some distant visits to pay. Even this momentary relief was a great thing to Mary; and as her father had resumed again his late breakfastings she anticipated with real pleasure some hours of at least freedom from annoyance.

It was one of February's sunny days—that short, sweet month, when first real spring begins his sure, unresting work. Six weeks had made a great difference in the face of nature since first they had come to the Park House, and that day she was walking in the sheltered garden with uncovered head—so warm it was,—enjoying for a brief space with infinite pleasure the fresh air and—tranquillity.

Exalted natures are ever the happiest, claiming thus their kindred with the bright essences above! Afflictions may crush, persecutions may depress; but as fire-flames burst up through every crevice that they find, so, afford but a moment's respite from actual suffering,—up springs again the noble strength, the heaven-happiness of such spirits—foretasting for a moment the bliss of that world where pain and sorrow shall have passed away, and joy ever lives at God's right hand.

Such a spirit was Mary's! so ready, so grateful to enjoy! She felt not to wrong her distant lover or her absent friend by feeling happiness when away from them, she felt fulfilling their dearest wish for her; and she garnered up each joyful moment that she had to tell them of it, as we might write from a far land of the jewels fair and bright which we had found along our path. She was above the affectation, the folly of nursing melancholy thoughts—thoughts all from beneath, and opened wide her heart to receive every—the smallest of those good and perfect gifts which come down from above. Taught of God to seek for happiness, not as her "being's end and aim," but as its privilege and duty, her heart responded to the softest touch of peace, the faintest breath of joy.

She was walking about delightedly examining the shoots and buds, when suddenly Captain Normanton appeared at the little iron gate. She was close to it, and could not retreat.

"I hope I have not startled you," he said. "I came to beg you and General Sydney to walk in the gardens to-day as usual, though my sister will not be there. I may come in, may I not?"

"My father is not down yet," she answered. But unheeding the implied refusal he unlocked the gate and entered. She was annoyed; but in a moment a bright hope sprang into her breast,—and she had so long wished too, to speak to him without Lady Davenport. But she did not like to take him into the house, so remained standing by the gate.

"May I stay here a little with you?"

She walked slowly on.

"I wished to see you, Miss Sydney," he began after a pause; "but perhaps it may be inconvenient to you now."

"No," she replied; "I also wished to be able to speak to you. I wished to say—to tell you that I was very uneasy—very unhappy—and perhaps you would help me."

She stopped, remembering suddenly that she could not ask *him* to convey Mrs. St. Clair's letters for her to the post.

"Command me," he said coldly.

She had felt so full of words a moment before; now his haughty look had chilled her very heart again.

"Will you not tell me what makes you uneasy?" he asked after a pause—rather more kindly.

"It is," she murmured timidly, "that I have not heard from—my friends—not once—since I came here."

"And what does Miss Sydney think I can do if her friends neglect her?" he asked with bitter triumph. "I cannot force constancy upon them."

"It is not them I doubt," she replied, as a proud smile mingled with her heightened colour, for she felt and resented this unfeeling speech.

"I knew you did not once," he exclaimed; "but time might have brought wiser feelings."

Too indignant to reply, she turned to leave him—alarmed too, at a discourtesy she had never met with before.

His feelings changed in a moment.

"Miss Sydney!" he exclaimed, following her, "I implore your pardon; I beseech you to feel for me—to understand—that subject must be torture to me!"

She paused, and said in her gentle voice,—

"I did not mean to pain you; I only wished to speak of what made me very unhappy, for I feel sure my letters have never reached them."

"Impossible! If you have written, your letters must have reached them—hers at least." He could not speak the name.

"Indeed, I am sure they cannot. She would never have so left me—to such misery!"

Distress at her distress—rage at her distress, struggled within him.

"Miss Sydney!" at length he said, "what are your suspicions? for you evidently *do* suspect."

"I think my letters are not sent."

"To whom do you give them?"

"To the young girl in the house."

"What motive can she have for suppressing them?"

"I know not. She may be ob——she may have to give them to some one else."

"To whom?"

This cold, hard inquisition terrified her; and how could she say "his sister?" She was silent, looking down tremulously, as if ashamed of her own accusing thoughts.

"By Heaven!" he exclaimed suddenly, seizing her arm with a grasp of iron; "in your darkest thoughts you have not dared to suspect me!"

"You!" she exclaimed. "As soon myself."

He turned from her, his breast heaving with uncontrollable emotion. It was some minutes before he could rejoin her; and when he did so, there was again that indescribable softness of expression.

"I can indeed understand," he said, "that this unaccountable silence must be trying to you, Miss Sydney, and I am at a loss to imagine by what accident it can have occurred. But you said you thought I would help you; will you tell me how?"

How could she tell him?

He guessed however, and told her so, adding,—

"You said you could trust me."

"Oh, yes! but——"

He held out his hand for her letter. She could not give it him.

"Do you *not* trust me, Miss Sydney?"

In a moment she had put it in his hand, yet half retained it till she had murmured, "I had forgotten to whom it was addressed."

His good breeding prevented his seeming to examine it; but there was an involuntary movement in his hand which seemed to show he was aware that it was a heavy one.

She could not appear to deceive him, so said—answeringly—in a gentle, feeling voice:

"It is to Mrs. St. Clair; but there is an inclosure."

His cheek was pale as he replied:

"You tax my nature highly, Miss Sydney,—as highly as you honour it by your trust."

"I feel I do," she replied; "but selfishly thought not of it in time. And yet, Captain Normanton,—brought here by your means, I might look to you for protection from wrong."

"By my means, Miss Sydney? Why do you say it was by

my means? I had no knowledge of it, till I heard that you were here—and not unwillingly. Oh!” he continued with an energy that overbore the contradiction that was bursting from Mary’s lips, “if you *could* willingly come here, Miss Sydney—can it be that this letter—these letters are needful to your happiness?—I beseech you to hear me;—to let me speak, once, all I would say. Had I believed your real happiness lay here,” half crushing the letter,—“that on that false and fickle boy you had well bestowed affections which would be all life, all heaven to me! I would have withdrawn a selfish suit,—I would—so God is my witness! have done what I could to promote your wishes. But now—never! I know St. Clair to be false—I know him unworthy of your regard, and spite of yourself, I *will* snatch you from ruin. Pray, pray! listen to me,” for she had indignantly turned from him. “Has my unswerving love no voice to speak for me within your heart? Has your father’s wish no power over you—you—who used to be so dutiful a daughter? Have the comforts of his old age—the blessings of his last breath—no share in your thoughts—no charm for your affections?”

“Oh! spare me—spare me,” she cried, as she covered her face with her hands and burst into tears.

“Forgive me,” he said, his stern nature however but half melted at her distress, “forgive me if I have pained you; but it is well that you should see your error before it is too late,—before you sacrifice to a selfish fancy for one who lightly holds your love—the life of him who has cherished you from infancy. Is it possible you do not see his sinking health—his——”

“Oh! do not speak so!” she sobbed forth, driven to despair by his cruel words. “Do I not see it? do I not feel it?—that he is sinking—wasting—so thin!—so pale! Oh God! oh God! what can I do?”

“Do as your duty to your father dictates,” he replied sternly, as an earthquake hope rocked his whole being. “Remember who it was that said, *that* was the ‘first commandment with promise.’”

“Oh! do not blaspheme His holy words,” she exclaimed, roused to indignation by this desecration of God’s truth; “He said ‘*Honour thy father.*’ And how shall I honour him, by aiding him in all that is most dishonourable? by letting him mix perjury, and ingratitude, and cruelty with his latest breath? No! Captain Normanton! I may rather ask you to look at his sinking life. It is in truth your doing,—all, all your doing. How happy he was before! how joyful!—but for the little infirmities of age,—how loving! Oh! I could break my heart to think of what he was—and is.”

"Forgive me, Miss Sydney," he said, coldly, "but you are much mistaken. It is—I repeat again, and with deep pain—all your work. My retiring from the scene would only take from him the little comfort he now possesses. He has told me himself, that no power should induce him to let you marry Mr. St. Clair, and that to me alone did he look for comfort for himself, or for protection for you when he was gone. Will you then, dear Miss Sydney, disappoint his hope? Will you set at nought the life and the just authority of a parent?"

"Authority he cannot have," she exclaimed, in great agitation, "to bid his child do wrong!—authority he cannot have to make her most wretched. Yet, God knows, were the sacrifice only my own, I would—try—to make it—for him. But you, Captain Normanton—is it possible you could value such a sacrifice?—possible you could bear to drag an unwilling, perjured victim to your home? What happiness—what blessing could you expect? Oh! if you would but feel for me! if you would but pity me!"

"I have sought you for your happiness, Miss Sydney," he replied, greatly disturbed; "I am no tyrant to delight in tears. But yet, as long as I have life, take this to your most inmost conviction,—never will I cease to urge my wishes—never will I cease to stand between you and the ruin your infatuation would bring upon you. Better both should die—a million times!"

"This is horrible!" she exclaimed.

"Forgive the violence of my words," he said, "but remember that their purport must remain unchanged. I would beg you to consider these things, were it only for your poor father's sake."

"Captain Normanton, I have no right to consider now. *He* saved our lives; our affection grew beneath my father's eye,—was sanctioned by his consent, and he has no power, no right to destroy it."

"I am not wishing to deny that a gallant deed was done," he said,—“though one that every sailor in the British navy would have performed as well,—I do not deny that a quick-sprung fancy between hearts so young was natural—was likely; but he has been false to that affection, and had she he loved abroad responded to his love, never would he—never could he have returned to you. Your father knows this and would sooner see you perish, than give you to one so unworthy of the trust. I have long wished to ask you to read this letter on the subject; will you do so now? it may help you perhaps to form a correct judgment."

It was Mr. Sangrove's letter. She took it and read it through

in silence; but if the fires of scorn and indignation that shot from her gentlest eyes could have ignited earthly substances, then would that unworthy scroll have turned to ashes in her hands. Captain Normanton watched her intently from beneath his lowering brows as she read it, and marked how the deepening colour rose, flush after flush upon her cheek. The expression of her drooping eyes was indeed hid; but the proud contempt that curled her lip, told him full well what were her feelings. She paused a moment after she had finished it, for she felt that the intensity of her indignation was greater at that moment than she would like to show. She folded it at length, and looking up, returned it, without comment.

"Do you see nothing in that letter that should make you at least pause, Miss Sydney?"

"It reveals nothing new to me," she replied with difficult tranquillity, "except the entire unworthiness of the writer."

"There are particulars in it, nevertheless," he replied with ill-suppressed rage, "that I never mentioned to you."

"None that Mr. St. Clair did not."

He bit his lip to the blood.

"Say what you will, Miss Sydney," he exclaimed, vehemently, "lost you shall not be; your father's and my care will prevent that."

"Have you ever written to Captain Seymour about this?" she asked, fixing her eyes on him with a calm, remonstrating look; "for I think his testimony would be the most valuable. And surely," and her voice and lips trembled with emotion, "it is but just to hear all, before you blast fame and happiness for life."

"I have heard enough to satisfy me thoroughly," he replied, with a contemptuous smile.

"Then there is nothing more to say," she sighed. And she turned to go to the house.

Captain Normanton was in a frenzy of irritation and despair. "Oh!" he exclaimed, following her, "that I knew what to say—what to urge, that would make you think for yourself,—your father,—and,—could you deign to do so,—for me,—and not continue a course that must end fatally to us all! I like not to speak of myself, Miss Sydney—of hopes raised continually, then flung recklessly to earth, but yet I feel that this struggle cannot go on for ever. And for you,—think of your fragile health, your drooping spirits, your pale, pale cheek! Have pity on yourself—on me, and waste not a life that is worth worlds!—worlds! What would I not do to make you happy? What wish should be unfulfilled—what thought unanswered? Oh! that you could but trust yourself to me!" He stopped in deep agitation.

"Captain Normanton," she said feelingly, yet firmly, "tell me, I beseech you, could *you* do as you are urging me?" She paused—but conscience-stricken, he dared not raise his eyes to hers, but bent them upon the ground, as the deep blood gave eloquent answer. "You know," she continued, "you could not!" "Miss Sydney," he replied at length, "you seem to taunt me with the very force of the feelings you despise; but the cases could never be similar. Nothing could ever be said against you."

"If it were, would you believe it?" she asked quickly—with countenance glowing and radiant eyes.

She scarcely knew the pain of the appeal she was making, bringing to his mind as it did, the consciousness of her implicit confidence in Mr. St. Clair.

"Miss Sydney," he said, with heaving agitation, "it is in vain you torture me thus. You may tell me that you hate me, tell me with crushing, crushing cruelty, that you love another—nothing shall turn me from my purpose—I have staked my life too deeply in it. Ask that life,—ask all that life holds dear,—but not that. As well think to chain the maddening winds!"

Mary trembled from head to foot.

"Again, forgive my violence," he said more gently.

She bowed assent, but she could not speak; her nature nearly failed.

"You will not speak to me?" he said, when they reached the house. "Your letter, however, shall be safely sent."

"No—no!" she exclaimed, holding out her hand for it; "I had rather have it back."

"Rather than owe even that slight obligation to me? But I have said it should go, so forgive me, if I do not return it. And now, Miss Sydney, part not from me in anger—say you forgive me."

"I do. But oh! Captain Normanton," she exclaimed, as she leant for support on the little iron balustrade, "is it not mockery to ask forgiveness for wrong persisted in?"

"I ask forgiveness for my violence," he replied haughtily; "I am conscious of no other wrong. You have spoken of misery, but in what does it consist? What would you wish changed? what done? If you will but speak—the riches of the world shall lie at your feet."

"I want nothing," she replied, "that riches can give; all is supplied,—most kindly—generously. But is it nothing to be as in a prison?—I may not stir,—not even to see the poor, more wretched than myself. Is it no wrong to be torn from the friend I loved, and forced—I will not say on those for whom I could feel no regard—for, for you, Captain Normanton, did you but act

generously by me—generously and well—I could feel earth's best regard."

His heart heaved beneath her words. What would he not have given at that moment, to have felt worthy of that regard—to have had time annihilated since that blessed walk towards Hastings?—to have been able to say, "I will do all you wish?" But now the power was gone from him,—he was the bond-slave of the evil to which he had given himself up.

"You have spoken, Captain Normanton," she continued after a pause, her whole heart softened as she saw his trouble, "of hopes continually raised, continually crushed. Oh! it is not so! I have never given such hopes, though they have been imputed to me, and I not allowed to raise my voice in my defence. I never knew that we were coming here,—and never would have consented had I known it. Oh! had I but guessed it even, my friends might have known where to find me; but now I am helpless quite—of earthly help."

Her low, gentle, murmuring voice subdued Captain Normanton's heart for a moment, and he could not answer.

"And my poor father too!" she urged, and her feelings deepened, and her voice grew tremulous—"oh! is it no wrong to have his love turned to bitterness,—to be tortured with reproaches and upbraidings—and from him who *was* all love?"

"I am ignorant of what you mean, Miss Sydney," said Captain Normanton, in real surprise—for he was unaware of many of the trials she had to endure. "That you were separated from your friend, I knew, of course; but of other troubles I had no conception."

She told him of the restriction of her steps to his park, and of Susan's forced departure. He was much shocked.

"But your father," he asked, in a voice even of emotion,—“I have never seen him other than kind to you?"

"Before you, no. But I did not mean to blame him."

"I had no idea of this," he said disturbedly; "I thought you had all happiness,—save for a passing moment. And yet—yet, Miss Sydney," and his tenderness gave place to an almost savage tone—"you can endure all this—anything, rather than listen to me! Great indeed must be your hatred."

"No," she said soothingly, "not that."

"No!" he replied fiercely, "not that—I understand you well. But," he added, with bitter irony mixed with his deep rage, "as you impute these sufferings to me, Miss Sydney, remember:—one word from you—and all is changed. One word—and your father's heart is yours again, and to-morrow's sun goes not down but your faithful servant is again with you. That word—Miss Sydney,—speak it, I implore you."

"Never!" she exclaimed faintly, turning to enter the house.

"Miss Sydney," he said, arresting her for a moment, and speaking in a voice that shook with passion—"remember! natures like mine do not often change their moods—determinations like mine do not often miss their object. I have put my life upon this thing, and I *will* succeed!"

He turned from her.

"Then must God have mercy on me!" she murmured; as, scarcely able to sustain herself, she reached the drawing-room, and sank upon a chair.

CHAPTER LIII.

To thy ownself be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Hamlet.

AND was it come to this? Was a nature formed in somewhat of a noble mould, so lost, so ruined, that though he would not himself be the author of cruel persecutions, he could yet bear to profit by them when exercised by others—and over one he thought he loved? It depended, Captain Normanton well knew, but on one authoritative word of his, to make General Sydney redress almost all the wrongs that had been laid before him, yet he could endure to leave Mary under all the distress they occasioned, and ignobly tell her there was no relief, but by submission to his will!

Oh! what a path is that of sin! How rapid in its descent from ill to worse, from worse to worst!

"And in the lowest hell a lower hell
Still opens to receive 'us.'"

It was but a moment before, that he had been touched by her sorrow—had felt shocked by the cruelties exercised towards her; but self had entered—he saw how his own cause might be advantaged by them—and all pity—all nobleness had vanished. Nay, finding her more than he had been aware of, in his power,—cut off from all refuge—he had borne even, to that gentle creature, to use words of violence and intimidation!

And was he the happier? Returning from that scene of sorrow to his own magnificent house, was it with a joyful countenance reflecting back the sunshine? or with lowering brow, and gloomy eyes that were never lifted from the ground? Was it with gay pleasure that he entered where luxury reigned in

every quarter—where the softest carpets lay beneath his feet, and softest couches waited to receive him? No! miserable, depressed, wretched beyond conception, he sought rest merely because, exhausted with the violence of his feelings, he needed it. He did not now, indeed, as once before, cower under the sense of degradation, for so far deeper was that degradation, that the sense of it was gone. "Have they no knowledge, that they are such workers of iniquity?" No—he had no knowledge—he knew not what he was become; his eyes were blinded—not by the fabled, gentle bandage of love, but by the hard, tight-drawn cords of desperate selfishness,—a selfishness that stifled every voice but its own within him, and made him revengeful, unfeeling, ruthless, where most he fancied that he loved.

He was sitting in gloomy thought when his sister entered, gay, and smiling,—equipped for her distant drive. He immediately got up to hide the disturbance of his countenance, but she had perceived it in an instant.

"This will never do, Sigismund," she said, kindly; "I cannot have these sad, melancholy looks. Where have you been?"

He told her; and she gained from him something of what had passed. She was excessively irritated.

"I have often told you how it would be," she said. "Those sweet, gentle creatures are as obstinate—oh, beyond all computation! She would have forgotten this foolish boy long ago, if she had not thought it proper to be what she would call, consistent, constant, and so forth; but having once mounted that fine pedestal, she does not know how to descend from it with dignity. Besides, as long as you continue the prostrate slave which you are, she thinks she may keep you at the end of her line as long as she likes, and when tired of 'playing' you, either 'land,' or let you loose at her good pleasure. You should, as I have often told you, either tell her at once that you have now other views, and then leave her to herself awhile, or—far more secure—tell General Sydney that you insist on having the marriage on such a day—and then be married and have done with it. She'd never resist if she was told it was to be; she would see it was inevitable, and resign herself, like a sensible girl—and then she would be very happy, instead of wearing herself, and everybody else to death, as she does now. Dear, what folly! as if it signified after all. Yes! you may look all sorts of weapons at me, my dear Sigismund—and to you, I believe really it does signify, otherwise I would not have taken all these pains about it;—but to the generality what is it? A person you like *may* make you happy, certainly, but the chances are frightfully against it; they generally torment you, as those so near your heart only can.

Look now at Lady Delverton! She was frantic in her youth for that Captain Young. Her father wouldn't hear of such nonsense, and she was to marry Lord Delverton. Well, she married Lord Delverton; and she has told me over and over again, that he was the best husband, and she the happiest wife that ever lived. He dies—and she goes and marries that Captain Young after all. A more wretched creature does not now exist! She still loves him too much to hate him, or leave him, or complain of him, but to my certain knowledge he actually beats her, and it is my belief that she is surreptitiously dying of it. Now, my brother—brother dear!” and she laid her hand on his shoulder, and looked up in his face so encouragingly, “you shall be Lord Delverton,—kindest husband—she—Lady Delverton,—happiest wife!—(only you know you must live to the end); and then you'll thank me for all my wise counsel and advice. By the bye, I have had to-day an odious letter, saying I must go up to those disagreeable lawyers (poor men, they are always abused!) to-morrow. A long day's cold journey is horrible at this time of the year, but it really seems to come on purpose to forward my little plans for you. Now, come with me to town. I will go to the Sydneys this evening when I come home, and tell them you are going, and that you do not know when you return—for you don't, you know;—and then, even if Mary—I beg your pardon—Miss Sydney—is not alarmed by the fear that you are tired of your *chasse*, I am certain the old man will be; and then he will exert himself to put an end to this foolish shilly-shally farce, and bring things to a crisis.”

Captain Normanton shuddered at the thought of bringing upon Mary still further suffering, and the remembrance of her sweet, sad countenance rose upbraidingly before him; but he turned from it, and steeled his heart with the thought that the severer the sorrow, the sooner would come relief—and really his own mind seemed bordering on madness. He agreed, therefore, though unwillingly; and submitted to being torn away from Lorrington for a while.

“The little change will do you good,” she said; “that poor, haggard face! I cannot bear to see it! And if we find afterwards that prompt measures will be best—a special license will soon arrange all that. You just put away your little fancies about gaining her consent, and so forth, and——”

“No, Augusta, never!—never without her consent.”

“You goose!” she exclaimed.

She might have added, “and self-deceiver;” for where was the moral difference between forcing a lip-consent rejected by all the powers of the soul, and acting independently of it?

“However,” she continued, “if you really think a formal

consent necessary, I'll manage all that beautifully for you. I remember a foreigner of my acquaintance, who declared he would never marry one of his own countrywomen. In a few months, lo! there he was, married! 'Comment ça?' (How was that?) I asked of one of his friends. 'Ah! on l'a mené à la campagne,' he replied, 'où on l'a fait si doucement, qu'il ne s'en est aperçu qu'après coup.' (Ah! they took him into the country, where they did it so gently, that he did not perceive it till after it was done.) And so your lovely love will find herself married some day, and be very well pleased that it is all over."

"No," he repeated; "never without her consent."

"Very well, but you're very foolish. Haven't I shown you that her pride and nonsense, of truth, and faith, and all that, may prevent her doing the thing herself, while she may be infinitely obliged at finding it taken completely out of her hands, and having this 'greatness thrust upon her?'"

"Well, you must I suppose, do as you think best; only—no force."

"Force! Again—you goose!"

The door opened, and the servant announced "Lord Hurleston"—a neighbour.

Captain Normanton had wholly forgotten that he had promised to show him some new buildings, and a new road he was making, and felt quite in despair at having to walk and talk. He took his hat however, and after a little conversation they went out; but he had not gone ten steps before he excused himself for a moment, and re-entering the drawing-room, said to his sister, rather nervously:

"I had promised Miss Sydney to see a letter of hers safely into the post; she has a fancy that her servants are not careful, and that her letters are lost. I was intending to put it in myself, but this unlucky engagement with Hurleston, which had quite escaped my memory, will keep me far beyond the post-hour. Will you put it in—or at least see it put in *yourself*, as you pass the post-office. Be sure and do it."

"Very well." And she held out her hand for it, sideways, appearing intent on looking for her card-case on the table, for she could not turn her guilty face towards her unsuspecting brother.

"Mrs. St. Clair!" she exclaimed, when she looked at it—astonished even out of her trepidation, and turning eyes wide open on Captain Normanton; "did Miss Sydney give this letter to *you* to put into the post?"

"She did—but not intentionally; that is, she mentioned about her letters not going, and I offered to put one in for her, and forced her to trust me with this—inclosure and all."

"Inclosure?"

"Yes, there is one she gave me to understand for the son."

"Well!" And she gave a sigh as much as to say that people were wonderful!

"You know she cannot deceive in the least point, and I saw she made a duty of telling me that."

"And you make a duty of sending it?"

"It is scarcely a duty. Having once received it, there is no alternative."

"My dearest brother!" she exclaimed almost tremulously, as a sudden gush of admiring tenderness came over her, and kissing his pale, though flushed cheek. "But now, go; you are keeping him so long waiting."

She watched him till he was at some distance, thinking what a noble, upright creature he was—and compared to her he certainly was—and half resolving that this horrible affair once over, she would never again engage in anything that required intrigue or deceit. Her penitence for the future, however, did not prevent her from then seating herself comfortably before the fire, and deliberately opening Mary's letter to Mrs. St. Clair. She read it quietly, and committed it to the flames; then opened the inclosure to her son.

There have been persons who, after having murdered their victims, have had a delicacy as to taking anything they found about them; but Lady Davenport would have had no such feeling—she had no scruple whatever in taking all the advantage that could at any time be derived from any of her deeds, so amused herself very pleasantly by reading the letters she so shamelessly intercepted.

None, however, that she had read before had affected her so much as these. They breathed such a spirit of joy, and of confidence as to their reaching their destination, that her heart smote her almost to sickness—Mr. St. Clair's especially; and had she not cut off her own retreat as it were, by burning his mother's, she felt as if she must—cost what it might—have sealed it up again, and sent it off.

The consciousness too, that she was now betraying her brother's trust as well as Mary's, made her feel most uncomfortable; and hastily committing the words of love and truth to the flames, she rung the bell and ordered the carriage round instantly, in an agony lest Captain Normanton should by any accident return and ask her for the letter. Yet as she tied the *cerise* strings of her bonnet under her rounded chin before the glass, she consoled herself by reflecting that had those letters been sent, her schemes—resting as they did for success chiefly on privacy—might have been completely destroyed; for had Mr.

Bruce discovered Mary's retreat, and come as of old to visit her, his quick eye would soon have discovered her wrongs, and his daring mind have determinately put forth its energy to protect her. So by the time she had seated herself comfortably in the carriage, and had said, "Stop at the post-office," she was again in a state of high self-gratulation and admiration; and curious it was, that she actually, determinately watched the footman's hand as he put some letters of hers and her brother's into the post, for the felt purpose of being able to say *with truth* that she had "seen *the letters* put safely in."

CHAPTER LIV.

Oh God! I am so young—so young!
 I am not used to tears at night
 Instead of slumber,—nor prayer
 With shaking lips, and hands outwring.
 Thou knowest all my prayings were:
 "I thank Thee Lord! for past delight!"

E. B. BARRAT BROWNING.

MARY had rested herself but a few minutes in the drawing-room after her agitating conversation with Captain Normanton, before her father's voice was heard calling her into the breakfast-room.

"Didn't I hear you talking to some one just now?" he said, peering at her suspiciously from under his long gray eyebrows.

She told him it was Captain Normanton, and why she had not asked him in.

"Pshaw! nonsense! As if this wasn't like his own house!" "What had he said to her? What had she said to him?"

Mary represented through the softest medium, something of what had passed; but the fact, which could not be concealed, of its all ending in her rejection of him, threw him into transports of rage. So furious was he, that it ended at last in his ordering her instantly to go to her own room, and not leave it again till she was prepared to do what he desired.

She went; but she could not think he would leave her there! "His anger would surely pass, and he would send for her, and she would go, and with her love strive to soothe and cheer him again! He would miss his child—her voice to sing to him, lulling him to his mid-day sleep—her hand to arrange for his feeble head the cushion she had worked for him. No! he would never leave her there!"

So she thought; but hour after hour had passed, and she had

listened with beating heart and stilled breath to every sound that reached her ear thinking it must be his footstep coming to fetch her, but he never came, never sent; and at length wearied out as she sat by the window watching if perchance she could see him in the garden, her head rested on the back of her chair, and she fell asleep.

The old man meanwhile was in all states of misery. First he would have her down again to reproach her; then he would go up to reproach her. Then he would have her down to forgive her, then go up to forgive her—anything so as to see her—to be with her; his love gaining strength from his anger, his anger from his love. His usual sleep at last overpowered him; but the waking up was worse than all. He wanted her to help him out of his chair, he wanted her to give him her arm till his limbs had got rid of their sleep-stiffness—he wanted her for this, for that; and for the first time, perhaps, felt what—without thanks, without praise—she had ever been to him. He must have her with him, though only, as he determined, to upbraid her with her undutifulness. But he hated the old woman who always answered his bell and waited on him, and could not bear to send a message up by her; so he tottered and stumbled up-stairs alone, more irritated with her for every totter and stumble. He entered her room, his lips loaded with invectives, and was preparing to pour them forth, when his eye rested on her calm pale face as she lay there so peacefully in her exhausted sleep, every line of her perfect features lit up by the golden light of the declining sun, like some angel surrounded by an aurioi of glory! He paused, conscience-stricken; and not daring to invade such heaven-sent slumber, stole away on tiptoe, half in guilty fear, half in tenderness, and went down stairs again to weep alone, bitterly.

In this mood of weakness and irritation he was found by Lady Davenport on her return from her drive. That day everything seemed to play into her hands.

"In tears, my dear General Sydney?" she said compassionately, taking his hand.

Then they flowed all the more, and all the more angrily. "Others could feel for him when Mary didn't!"

And then there came a long recital of his wrongs and miseries; all of which Lady Davenport ministered to with an *aigre-doux* hand, quite marvellous! soothing him for the moment by saying how very terrible she thought them, but dexterously planting a barbed sting where there had been but a thorn before.

She shook her head and sighed; and then broke to him confidentially that she thought her brother had really given the thing up at last—wearied of all the trouble, and very much

cooled in his attachment by the obstinacy of Mary's conduct. In fact he was, she said, going to town the next day with her; and it was quite uncertain whether he would again return during General Sydney's stay at the Park House. And then she dropped—like a fire-drop—a hint, though scarcely spoken, of a phantom wife that was likely to appear from somewhere else some day, which made the old man completely crazed. He swore, he vowed, that if Lady Davenport would only prevent that, he would force a consent from his daughter before the week was over;—if she would only make her brother come back, all should be as he wished.

She shook her head again more solemnly than before, and said: "She really didn't know now—he had been kept in such uncertainty so long—things had been allowed to go on in so wearing a manner, she almost feared he did not feel the same earnestness that he had done before; but still for General Sydney's sake, as he seemed to wish it so much, she would try what she could do, if he too would promise to exert himself."

She then asked for Mary; and when he told her—half ashamed, yet half proud of himself—that he had ordered her to stay in her own room, she was enchanted. The idea had never occurred even to her; and knowing what a dreadful trial it would be to her to be kept away from her father, she really hoped great things from it, and determined to encourage him in it to the uttermost. So she began to speak against it.

"Dear General Sydney!" she exclaimed: "is not that after all rather too severe? It will be such an unhappiness to her, and to you too, to be separated; and you must not hurt yourself for her misconduct. To be sure, I have heard of such things bringing a person sooner to reason than anything; and I confess I think our dear Mary is a little headstrong and disobedient, to resist all your kindness. So perhaps you are right,—yes, perhaps you are right, you are always right! and however painful it may be, very soon I have no doubt, you will be rewarded for your self-denial."

She then took her leave, still shaking her head, and sighing her fears that after all it might be too late to recall her brother.

When she was gone, General Sydney, in a state of dismay and irritation difficult to be exceeded, tottered up again to Mary's room, and roughly waking her, commenced a torrent of reproach against her for all sorts of things: his poverty, his misery, his broken health, his death that was sure to be—and worst of all, Captain Normanton's probable secession and desertion.

Spite of fright and grief, the hopes held out of the latter event caused Mary's heart to leap with joy—she could not believe that such a relief was to be afforded to her! But when she found it

was from Lady Davenport only, and not from himself that the report came, her heart sank within her again; and connecting it with the new and aggravated threats that her father began to pour forth against her, she readily divined her motive for saying it, and shrunk in literal terror from the prospect before her.

Exhausted by his rage, the old man at length began weeping. His wretched child in speechless agony threw herself down before him, and clasping his knees, wept too as if her heart would break.

"My father," at length she faltered out; "oh! have pity on me—have pity on me!"

"Have pity on you! when you have none on an old man like me," he exclaimed piteously. "To leave me to be turned out of this house, and all my hopes blighted. Oh! what a curse it is to have an obstinate, ungrateful child!"

Mary in tenderest tones spoke her love, her duty; and lifted up to him such a face of grief and loveliness, that any one less blinded by passion must have raised her in his arms and blessed her. But he was possessed—quite possessed by the spirit of evil; and tearing himself away from her clinging grasp with a strength he could hardly have been thought to possess, he threw her from him, and shutting the door with violence, locked and double-locked it as he left the room.

Mary lay where he had thrown her, prostrate in mind and body, and stunned with affright. She felt as if she could never speak again, never lift up her head. But after a long time, the sound of some one unlocking the door roused her. She rose hastily and went to the window to conceal the dishevelled trouble of her appearance, and then the old woman knocked and entered, bringing with her some refreshment, sorely needed by the imprisoned girl, who had not tasted food since her early breakfast.

"General Sydney desired me to bring this to you here.

"Thank you."

And the door was closed, and locked again.

She was glad to be left alone; and felt that there was worse companionship than solitude,—so thanked her God. Yet she cried till tears seemed spent; and all night long she got no rest for sorrow.

The next morning when she was just dressed, a carriage stopped at the gate; and soon after, soft steps were heard on the stairs, and a soft voice at the door asked if it "might come in." And then the key turned softly and Lady Davenport appeared. Nor was the concern visible in her countenance wholly fictitious. The thought of the locked door ran chilly through her, and stirred for a moment her dormant conscience;

and the sight of the poor patient girl too moved her almost to tears.

"My dear," she said, "I am so shocked at this!" And then she went on to say, with audacious falsehood,—how surprised she had been at finding that it was all about her brother, whose attachment she had never even suspected before; but that she found he was determined on succeeding—and General Sydney too—and feared she would have a dreadful battle to fight with two such determined spirits, her father being really furious because she pleaded for her to have her liberty again.

"And after all," she added, "why should you not, my dear Miss Sydney, like my brother?"

"I am engaged, and attached to another," murmured Mary.

"Oh! that young St. Clair! I had heard of that, but imagined you would have had too much delicacy and pride to have gone on with an attachment which he seems to value so little. However," she continued patronizingly, "I know that those things do hang about one for a long time sometimes; but a sensible, good girl like you will never let yourself be so led away as to follow a person with your love who does not care for it."

Mary felt very indignant, but remained silent. Of what avail were words?

"Why did you not, my dear little girl," began Lady Davenport again, "at least give me some idea of all this before? I might have warned my poor brother, and have prevented his indulging the hopes he seems to have done. And indeed, my dear Miss Sydney, I must say, now I know the whole, that I think you have acted rather a coquettish and ungenerous part. I can now recall a hundred little things—which at the moment even struck me, though I forgot them again because I had no particular clue to their meaning—but which must have immensely encouraged my poor brother. And I must say, that in my opinion, when a girl has done that, she acts most dishonourably if she rejects a person; and I think you will feel, on a little consideration, that you really have no right—that you cannot in short do it. But now I really want you to tell me, what you can find to dislike in my brother? Where will you meet with one so handsome, so gentlemanlike, so generous, so kind?"

"Were he an angel, Lady Davenport,—I am engaged to another," faltered Mary.

Lady Davenport gave a short, rageful sigh.

"Very well, my dear, I say no more; you must have it your own way, I suppose,—as long as you can. But I think that when you really find out what that young sailor is—as you

must some day—you will repent having for his sake ill-treated—dishonourably treated—one who deserved everything from you. And one more little word of warning let me give you. Men are not generally very forgiving; and feeling, as I do, that you will be made—either by your own good sense, or by very cruel treatment from your father, which he seems determined on—to yield to his orders in this matter, I do most earnestly advise you not to lay up for yourself wretchedness perhaps for life. Now, my dear brother looks upon your conduct as the caprice of a young, romantic, little girl; but if you persist, you may lay up in your *husband's* heart, a resentment which you may bitterly rue through many a long and miserable year. I am older than you are, my dear, and have seen much of the world, and of this kind of thing; and I do really beseech you, for all our sakes, to hasten and undo what may be a blight upon us for ever. Now then, my dear Miss Sydney, I am sure you will think better of it. My brother is forced to go to London with me to-day for a short time; but think what a moment of joy it would be to him—to us all, if you would let me take you down now, and say you were ready to make us all happy! Your poor father too—bowed down with unhappiness as he is now—think what rapture he would feel! Your father! oh! you cannot refuse to make him happy!”

And with a playful smile she took Mary's hand, and strove to make her rise. But Mary gently resisted, and left unanswered the winning smile; for her heart was torn by misery and sunk in deep despondency.

“Well then! if you will not come—at least—some little word?”

“No, Lady Davenport, you know it cannot be. My promise is Mr. St. Clair's, my heart is his. He saved my father's life for me,—mine for my father.”

Lady Davenport was silenced for a moment under this mighty plea; but then rallying her courage she said:

“But these things are got over every day, my dear Miss Sydney; and what others can do for mere ambition perhaps, one would think that one so pious and good as you, would strive at least to do for a father's sake—one who has poured all the love of his warm heart on you—his only child.”

Mary buried her face in the sofa, and strove to repress the sobs that shook her whole frame.

Lady Davenport, really affected though keeping her point steadily in view, put her hand kindly on her shoulder, and stooping down, laid her cheek against her glossy hair, whispering words of sweet soothing and kindness—of courage and resolution. But Mary shook her head, though she could not

help returning the pressure of the hand that had taken hers,—touched even by the semblance of affection and yearning for kindness from the depths of her loving, unhappy heart. She roused herself in a few minutes however, and—convulsive sobs struggling with every word—said :

“Speak for me to my dearest father, Lady Davenport. Tell him I do not care for imprisonment, but only to see him—only to be allowed to make him comfortable—as no one else here can—and then to come back to my room again. Plead for me that I may do this—beg of him to let me do this.”

“And is there no little—very little concession that can be made in answer to the permission you wish granted?—that you will think of it—will try at least what you can do?”

“Oh! I cannot think of it! oh! I cannot try. One thought of Mr. St. Clair, one remembrance—fills all my heart.”

“My dear Miss Sydney,” said Lady Davenport reprovingly, “you should not acknowledge such a thing of any one. Besides, I know you very often speak of religion; and it strikes me that if you have, as you have said, often found the efficacy of prayer, you should not neglect it now, but ask to be strengthened in the path of duty, and not to give foolish way to any feeling of this kind.”

“Oh! have I not prayed—have I not prayed?” she exclaimed; adding, as a soft, sad, quivering smile played a moment on her lip, “I may say in the words of another :

“‘The more I pray—the more I love ;
It is no sin—for God is on our side.’”

“Very well,” said Lady Davenport, offended beyond measure, “I can say no more. I only fear that you may repent your want of feeling when your poor father is laid perhaps in his hastened grave, and when you find that he, for whom you have sacrificed duty and everything, is wholly unworthy of you—not to say wholly indifferent.”

She went down stairs, and reported her want of success; but taking General Sydney apart, she encouraged him in the continuance of the plan he had adopted, auguring the best possible result from it. The wretched old man promised that he would follow her advice; and the brother and sister then, with tempers and hearts irritated and depressed, set out on their cold, dreary journey to London.

“Sigismund dear,” said Lady Davenport, after they had driven some miles in gloomy silence, “don’t stay in town—not a day; go to your cousin’s in ——. I know you must just go to

that horrid Admiralty, but do not stay a moment longer than you need. If you were to meet that Mr. Bruce, all might be ruined. He would find out her retreat—for you are too open to conceal anything—and then he would bombard the house down to get her away if he chose it. And that mother would be coming—and we should have all our work over again, or have to give up all for ever; and really I almost wish you could decide to do that at once, and not wear yourself to death,—so thin and pale as you are!”

“Never! Augusta!” he exclaimed vehemently. “I told you at Hastings, that if I did not put all my energies into St. Clair’s cause, I must in my own. I have done so—will do so—till I succeed—or—perish!”

Lady Davenport turned away, that he might not see the spasm of agony that she felt cross her countenance.

CHAPTER LV.

Thou art the sanctuary
Of the regenerate;
The hope, the comforter, the strength,
Of the disconsolate.
Enshrined within Thy presence, let me see
Thee only, and forget my misery.

The Dove on the Cross.

It is impossible to describe the state of excitement that General Sydney was in when the carriage drove off and he was left alone. Captain Normanton, actually gone, filled him with fear and rage. He mounted once more to Mary’s room. The door was unlocked (Lady Davenport had not borne to lock it), so he entered without any warning to her. She was standing by the open window that the air might refresh her burning eyes and cheeks; and was with accustomed love, though scarcely aware of what she was doing, trimming and training her passion-flower, converted into an evergreen by the warm temperature of her room. She turned on hearing him approach, but terror repressed the impulse that would have made her rush into his arms; and with trembling affright she awaited and had to endure the outpouring of his rage, his reproaches, and threats. Happily, however, her head was so confused, and his voice so indistinct and husky with rage, that little more than the bitter unkindness of the whole reached her ear. And then he wept and bemoaned himself, till she felt her heart torn with anguish, telling her that

that was the last time she would ever see him, and that if he died his blood would be upon her head.

She really felt going distracted—mad! The agony of her soul was so great that she doubted whether she could be right—whether God was not by these intense sufferings showing her that the path she was in was not the straight and narrow one—forcing her to adopt the other, and to sacrifice her peace, her happiness, her truth, and—she felt her life, to her father's wishes.

For a moment her very existence seemed to reel under the frightful torture of that thought, and she stood there rigid, immovable—every nerve and muscle strung to agony, every vein and artery swelled to bursting—while her father poured into her unhearing ears fresh torrents of upbraidings, even of curses. A torpor almost of inanity at last came to her relief, and her muscles relaxed, and her heart began a heavy tolling beat. Her mind wandered in vacancy, while her hand unconsciously pursued its late loving task, and moved and played among the leaves of her cherished plant.

In an instant her father had recognized it. He sprang upon it like a tiger, tore it up by the roots, broke it to pieces, and furiously threw it from the window.

Mary covered her face with her hands, but no word, no sigh, no sound escaped her. Her heart seemed dead. The old man, seemingly ashamed of the paltry vengeance of his act, turned to steal away—muttering as he went that she would “never see him again—never see him again.”

The door was locked upon her once more; and at length from very weakness her hands fell from her face. She looked around, scarce knowing where she was, till her eye falling on the despoiled flower-pot, the whole tide of feeling rushed back upon her. Yet not the same as had nearly proved fatal to her a few minutes before; the doubt—that deadly doubt—had passed; and as she gathered up the few torn leaves of her plant that lay about the window-sill, her tears were almost childhood's tears, so pure, so innocent, so natural, so relieving!

Her mind was now calm again, her sense of duty clear; and a firm reliance on her God sent peace anew into her heart. She felt that she must be delivered—that God would surely in His good time effect her escape from all her troubles.

She had now at least one bright point of animating hope—her letter was gone! Even now perhaps Mrs. St. Clair had received it; and though she dreaded that her answer might be intercepted, still she would know where she was, and let Mr. Bruce know, and she felt sure that were he in the country still. it would not be long before he sought her out. What she hoped

from his coming she could hardly have said; but she felt that it would be comfort—rescue!

The thought of her father was terrible to her;—a maze, a mystery, a horrid dream! Where was that love that had seemed his very being? Where that honour that had been as himself—and those often pious feelings that had seemed to speak a heart renewing under the cultivating hand of God? All gone? was it possible that they were all gone—that he was indeed what his words—his acts bespoke?

Or was it—her thoughts sometimes whispered, though horror crept upon her as they did so—that his mind was wandering, his senses turned astray? She hoped—yet dreaded that it might be so. But oh! fearful refuge! when from guilt for what we love, we have to turn to madness!

Her mind was sorely troubled as the same thoughts went round and round in her mind; and doubts, chased for a moment, recurred again and again. She seated herself in her warm place, and felt the glow of the fire revive her. She remained long inactive, pondering painfully over many things, and shedding many innocent tears over the destruction of the plant she had loved so much—whose memory was blended with the happiest hours she had passed in life. At last to divert her thoughts she took down a book from the little bookcase. She looked at the title; it was "*Le mie Prigioni.*" (My Prisons.)

"And I am now a prisoner!" she thought mournfully. Yet as she looked around at her apartment, bright, cheerful, commodious, how different she felt it was from the "*duro carcere*" (hard captivity) which the persecuted and excellent man, whose work she held in her hand, had had for so many mortal years to endure,—though again she felt how far more bitter the suffering which comes from those we love, than any which an enemy can bring upon us. She put back the saddening volume, and took one down containing his poems, many of them so beautiful! and her heart thrilled as she read the words:

"D' uopo ho d'amarti, e d' uopo ho che tu m' ami,
O tu che per amar mi desti un cuore."*

(Need have I to love Thee, and need have I that
Thou shouldst love me,
O Thou! who, that I might love, gave me a heart.)

"Yes!" she exclaimed; "need indeed have I to love Thee, my God!—need, sorest need, that Thou shouldst love me!"

And then the thought of her God overflowed her spirit, and all seemed welcome that His "heart of love" could permit to fall upon her. She remembered our Lord's words: "As the Father

* Silvio Pellico.

hath loved me, so have I loved you." "*As the Father;—with what infinite love! so have I loved—loved my people.*" How then could she doubt, or tremble?—how fear, or despond? Her heart rose on the holy thought, till she seemed almost to mingle with the innumerable multitude around the throne, and join their songs of gladness, and have their joyous praise upon her lips. Then she was happy! so great is the relief—almost as of a soul delivered from the body—to exchange the distracting griefs of life, for that pure, calm, holy, golden presence of our God!

Yes! "the kingdom of God is within us;" and we are happy if, "when looking to the altars of our hearts, we find them ever lighted with undying incense to Him who dwelleth there,—making the once dark place full of light and happiness!"

The appearance of the old woman recalled Mary again to a sense of her present troubles; but she descended into them now with a more tranquil spirit than before. The "deep rest of God's eternity" had entered into her soul.

It was now however, literally "bread of affliction, and water of affliction," that she had to partake of; and even her old attendant, harsh as she was, seemed half-ashamed of her cruel mission, for she stated that she was sorry, but that it was General Sydney's orders, and "he would hear no reason about it."

The poor girl took it, and gladly—for it was the first food she had had that day. Now that she felt convinced that it was aberration of mind in her father which made him act as he did, much of the pain which his conduct had given her was gone; but at the same time she felt her tenderness towards him revive a hundred-fold, and such love came gushing from her heart as made it real agony to be kept away from him. She thought of him at his lonely, wretched meal, and felt how little would avail all that could be spread before him, if she were away; and her heart swelled to suffocation, and she could hardly swallow the dry morsel that was all he had spared to her. She rose, and walked about to chase the thought of him from her mind, or rather to turn her wretched thoughts into earnest prayers, that her heavenly Father would recall his wandering mind from its aberrations, and shower fresh blessings upon him.

A low knock came at the door; and a whispered "Miss Sydney," was heard.

"Yes," said Mary, in hope and alarm, though of what she knew not—as she recognized the voice of her younger attendant.

"I only—while master's at dinner—come to say that I've got your plant that fell out of the window, quite safe, though it's all broken."

"Oh, Lucy, have you?" exclaimed Mary—the sudden, choking tears springing to her eyes. "How good of you! how kind! Keep it, good girl—keep it for me, where no one will see it. Water it—take care of it, and I'll never forget it—no! not all my life."

"Oh! it's nothing, Miss Sydney; only I knew that you were choice of it, and thought you'd like to know as 'twas safe. But now, I daren't stay, ma'am; if they found me here, they'd turn me away in a minute."

"Oh! go then, but thank you again and again," exclaimed Mary,—“so very, very much!” And the soft, cautious tread of the kind girl was heard descending the stairs again.

How melted was Mary's heart! That God should think even of this for her! "It requires great love to think of little things," but whose love is like God's? What human friend would think of one thousandth part of the small mercies and momentary pleasures with which one ordinary day abounds? Yet God thinks of them—for nothing that is large enough to interest us is too insignificant for His wonderful love to provide for. "Nothing is too great for His power—nothing too small for His love." And when, as will happen, we obtain not at times the things that we wish—that we ask for—is it not solely because He sees that we are ignorant of what is for our chief good, and knows that "there is sometimes a better way of hearing our requests, than that of granting them?"

CHAPTER LVI.

Slave! I have set my life upon a cast,
And I will stand the hazard of the die.

King Richard III.

WHEN Lady Davenport was going to town she had asked General Sydney if there was anything she could do for him.

"Nothing, but to take charge of a small parcel for his banker; a power of attorney," he said, "to sell a small rag of property that still remained to him."

Lady Davenport took charge of it; and as hers was the same banker, and she had business with him, she went a few days after her arrival in town, and delivered it herself—repeating as she gave it into his hands, the words General Sydney had used.

"Rag of property!" exclaimed the banker laughing, "why he has thousands and thousands! a man of very considerable tune indeed, though not in land. But I think he is gone mad."

"Added," "People sometimes, old people especially,

get a monomania this way,—fancy they are ruined and are going to starve, when they are rolling in wealth. He had losses in some foreign funds some time ago; and then his house taking fire I think must have upset his mind. Well! his heir will find himself a 'millionnaire,' that is all."

Lady Davenport sat petrified—not with pleasure, but with apprehension. How thankful she was that she had prevented her brother from staying in town!—he might have come with her there, and learnt what she now determined sedulously to keep from him.

The additional wealth she was not one to despise; but her fear was, that should her brother become aware that poverty would not be Mary's portion in after-times, one of his great excuses for persisting in his suit would be done away with, and she thought it possible that, in a fit of "chivalrous absurdity," he might inform Mary of what he had discovered, and abandon his suit.

But alas! she need not have been afraid. Time was—a more blessed time for him—when without a moment's hesitation he would have done so—when he could not have done otherwise. But now his nature was sorely changed. Mary's wealth indeed he would not still have given a moment's thought to; but he was now so completely a slave to his own selfish purposes, that the effort of emancipating her would have been far too great—the thought far too generous for him to have attained to, and he might have stooped to have kept up a fraud, as he had to accept the help of cruelty.

This however she did not think; she knew not how much she herself had lowered the tone of his mind, and fostered that selfishness which had ever been the bane of his character. She was in an agony therefore to return and bring the matter to a close, before any discovery could be made.

But how would even she have been startled, had she known that Captain Normanton was at that moment in possession of a far guiltier secret even than her own.

At the Admiralty he had met Captain Seymour. He was but slightly acquainted with him; but with that infatuation which sometimes, spite of ourselves, makes us rush on that which we feel may make us miserable, he went and talked to him—talked with desperate wilfulness of Mr. St. Clair, and even—as if he wished to pluck destruction upon his own head—of the affair in Spain.

Captain Seymour spoke his thorough belief in Mr. St. Clair's perfect honour, giving him the highest character in every respect, and speaking in unmeasured terms of the dishonourable conduct of Mr. Sangrove throughout the whole affair.

The tumult in Captain Normanton's mind was beyond description. He could not resist the conviction of the truth, and the only line of honour lay clear before him ; he knew it—yet felt it impossible to follow it. With such a desperation had he set, as he had said, his life upon the thing, that, braving honour, conscience, mercy, he madly rushed on. No longer blinded, he knew himself the wretch he was ;—felt his infinite degradation, but could not struggle against it. Like one in the oppressive visions of the night, he seemed to have no power of exertion—like one buried alive beneath rocks and ruins, he felt the crushing weight yet could not raise an arm to throw it off. One prayer might have availed ; but he used it not,—knew not its precious, mighty potency :—

“ We kneel, how weak ! we rise, how full of power ! ”

Lady Davenport's business kept her still in town some days, but those days seemed interminable to her. She profited by them however to get a special license, and to have a handsome, but plain and appropriate wedding dress made for Mary ; for she felt sure that separation from her father would completely have subdued her spirit. She wrote daily to General Sydney to enforce it, and he assured her daily that it was enforced.

And enforced it was, almost to the destruction of both father and child. Continually did Mary ask with deepest anxiety about her father ; and continually was she told by her callous attendant, that he seemed weakening every hour.

“ Indeed, Miss Sydney,” added the old woman one day ; “ I don't think master will hold out much longer. The doctor says he can make nothing of him ; his appetite is quite entirely gone, and he gets no rest of nights. I must say, without offence I hope, that if ever young lady brought her father's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, it is you. What your heart is made of I can't think ! I'm sure I'd as lief shoot him through the head at once, poor old gentleman ! and put him out of his misery.”

Mary, half dead at hearing these things, implored the old woman, “ for the love of God to obtain permission for her to go, if only for one moment, to her father.”

“ Indeed Miss Sydney I can't do any such a thing, unless I'm to tell him that you're going to be a dutiful young lady, and do as he desires. He's strickly forbid me even to mention your name to him, and it's as much as my place is worth to do it.”

“ Then let me go without your speaking ;—I'll take all the blame,” urged the poor girl. “ He'll not be angry. He wants me—nothing but cruelty keeps us apart. Oh ! my dear father ! my father ! ” And struggling sobs rent her very heart.

"It's nobody's cruelty but your own, that I must say," observed the obdurate woman, who carried well out the task that had been enjoined her; "and I'm sure there's not another young lady in England as wouldn't be proud to marry the Captain, so good a gentleman as he is, and with his great house and all. It's nothing but sheer obstinacy; I'm as sure as I'm alive, it's nothing but sheer perverseness."

"Oh! it is not—it is not," exclaimed the poor girl. "If I could only see my father once again, he would forgive me, and let me stay with him. Oh! if ever you loved anything in life, help me to see him." And she threw herself on her knees before the old woman, and seized her gown with convulsive grasp as she was turning to leave the room.

The muscles of that hard, colourless face quivered for a moment; but composing them again before she turned round, she said:

"Miss Sydney, it's very unbecoming for you to kneel to such as me. I hope I know my place and don't wish to presume. I only speak my mind, without offence I hope, that you mayn't bring a parent's blood upon your head."

Mary could endure no more, she sprang up, and rushed to the door hoping to find it unlocked; but the wary woman had locked it as she entered, though more from natural caution than from any idea of an attempted escape. She regarded with a malicious smile the baffled girl, who completely overcome, had thrown herself back overpowered in her chair; then secretly drawing forth the key, she was out of the room in a moment, and the door secured hopelessly again.

Who can conceive what that poor girl's feelings were! At times she thought she must yield to her father's will—so terrible were her sufferings on his account; then the thought of Mr. St. Clair, and the agony he would have so guiltlessly to endure—and the remembrance of her own vows on which he relied so trustingly—prevented her.

For herself she seemed scarcely able to have a choice, so perfectly miserable was she every way; but whenever she cast her cause before God, and implored His righteous guidance, she felt strengthened in the decision not to be false to him who had deserved such truth from her. And when she thought tranquilly of her father too, she felt convinced she was pursuing the best course for his ultimate happiness, for that that was much more likely to be secured by drawing him again within the home of the St. Clairs, than by throwing him with Captain Normanton who always terrified him, and with Lady Davenport, who, though she flattered, yet always made him feel the galling weight of her powerful will,

Day after day, hour after hour, did she live in the hope that Mr. Bruce would come; though how she was to communicate with him she never thought. But he did not come; and her brain grew dizzy, and her senses nearly failed her. She looked constantly, but in vain, from the window to see if any soul passed to whom she could call for help—but the walk in the park only went from their house to Lorrington, and the part of the grounds she looked upon was wild and unfrequented.

Another dreadful night passed, after her futile attempt at escape,—sleepless and miserable. As she was pacing her room the next morning, she heard the two servants talking together on the landing near her door—so loud it almost seemed done purposely.

"All night long,"—it was the old woman who was speaking—"have I been up and down with him; and if it wasn't for my high pay, I wouldn't stay here another day. I've no patience with him! If he can't sleep himself, why must he keep other folks awake. Call—call—without end. However he's wearing away, and he'll be quite gone soon. Every morning when I get up, I think there'll be one less of us before night,—that I certainly do."

"Dear! Mrs. Winslaw, you don't say so!" said the younger maid, in a voice of fear and compassion.

"I do though;—only that they say that people's being cross shows they've got some time yet. However I don't think that; and anyhow I don't mean to keep waiting on him as I have done up to the present. If he's so cross, he may be cross by himself."

Mary stood rooted to the spot. Her father, in the decrepitude of his age and understanding to be left to the sole charge of this woman! Horror seized her. Escape she determined on—escape to him—by some means or other. She sought in vain how it could be effected; the window was too high for her to descend without risk, besides which, her father lived in the room below, and the old woman generally with him, and she might be stopped before she could get to him.

There was, beyond her room, a large closet filled with wardrobes, &c., and lighted by a window in the roof, which sloped there. In this closet there was another door, but it had been locked ever since she had been there. This door she now determined to endeavour to force open, as the passage which ran by it was seldom used, and any noise made there would not be so readily heard as at the other on the stairs. With great exertion therefore, she moved away a chest of drawers which stood against it, and tried every means to force open the lock, but all in vain; and in despair she was about to move back the

drawers to their place that her futile attempt might not be discovered, when seeing them standing just under the slanting window, a new hope suggested itself—she would endeavour to get out by that. It was high up; but she thought that if she placed a table on the drawers, and a chair on that, she might be able to reach it. She piled up the furniture therefore; and then by that unstable footing she succeeded in getting her head and arms out of the window, which opened by a cord. When she looked out, she found that the roof had no sort of parapet. She would not be deterred however; and with desperate exertion she raised herself, and got out. Her brain turned dizzy when on the roof, which was covered with half-melted ice, and frightfully slippery; but at a few yards' distance there was a parapet, and within it a projecting window; and to that she determined, if possible, to make her way. Dangerous as it was, it was her only chance; the slope was not very rapid, and she thought it possible she might do it. She stayed for some minutes before she could summon courage to go on; but at last she quitted her hold of the window-frame, when the tile she had grasped in its stead gave way in her hand—she slipped—and fell from the roof in an instant.

Oh! the terrors of a fall! Mid air! nothing to grasp—nothing to hold! A horrible dream of agony!

By one of those apparently slight circumstances which the world calls "fortunate," however, was she saved from destruction. Some evergreens,—yew, laurels, &c., had been planted on that side of the house when it was built; but though not high, they had grown so thick that it was thought they tended to make it damp at that part, and they had been condemned, and were to have been cut down the last autumn. But Lady Davenport had reprieved them as long as possible, because they were some whose planting she remembered her father had taken particular pleasure in superintending—so there they still remained; and thus the affection of one daughter saved the life of another a million times more devoted. Let it not be said it was chance!

"The merest seeming trifle is ordered as the morning light,
And He that rideth on the hurricane is pilot of the bubble
on the breaker."

These shrubs broke Mary's fall—the thick branches of the yew sustaining her for a few moments, then gradually bending beneath her weight till she fell from them to the ground. She lay there for some time, stunned and terrified. But the cold of that shaded part, where the last night's frost lay still in all its sparkling beauty on the hard ground, was so great, especially

to her uncovered head, that it roused her, and she felt the necessity of exerting herself to find shelter.

Her heart was very full of thankfulness because of her deliverance; and she asked imploringly that she might be allowed to succeed, and see her father, and find him kind and loving. She made her way to a side-door, and entering softly, stood in the shadow of the passage just opposite the drawing-room door. It was open, and she heard voices in it. One was that of the old woman, the other her father's. Oh! how it fell upon her ear, as a strain of the olden time,—so long did it seem since she had heard it! And yet it was not the same, but weak, and childishly piteous. She was scarcely able to prevent herself from rushing to him at once when she caught sight of his stooping emaciated figure; but she feared the old woman, and restrained herself till she thought she would be gone.

"Will you please to take it, sir?" she heard her say. "The doctor says you must take it, and here you stay looking at it as if you were a real baby."

The old man muttered something, looking up upbraidingly into that parched face.

"Take after it!" she replied. "Why what would you have? There's some water, that's quite enough. Come! I can't stay here all day."

Still he looked ruefully at the nauseous potion, and shuddered as she stirred it round and round.

"Will—you—take it?" she exclaimed, pushing him at last rudely on the shoulder, almost with a little shake.

The old man turned round in anger, and yet in fear, while the tears ran down his hollow cheeks. Mary's indignation was too great, and forgetting all else she sprang forward towards him.

"Oh! my darling, my darling!" he exclaimed, stretching his arms out wildly to her, and bursting into hysterical cries.

In a moment she was before him, kneeling, her arms thrown round him, her head resting on his breast; while his arms were around her neck,—and showers of tears and kisses covered her brow and dishevelled hair.

The old woman could not believe her senses.

"How could it have come to pass?" and "What would my lady say?"

Wholly disregarding of her, the father and child continued their fond embraces—murmuring broken words of a love that no words could speak, and feeling in that moment of reunion a compensation for all their griefs.

"You will let me stay with you, my father?" at length whispered Mary in a faltering voice,—“you will let me stay with you,—and not let me be sent from you again?” And he was

beginning to say that she should never leave him,—never let him be ill-used again but take care of him for ever, when the old woman interrupted him, saying that it was by his own orders that Mary was locked up in her room,—that she had no interest in doing so; and reminding him that he had said she was “an obstinate, ungrateful daughter, and should never come down till she had returned to her duty, and was willing to marry Captain Normanton.”

She would have gone on had not her words brought all his supposed wrongs—banished for the moment by Mary's gentle presence—back upon General Sydney's memory—mingled with the hope that Mary's appearance there was the sign of her having relented as to her decision. His kisses suddenly ceased, and he drew back a little from the clasp of her loving arms, as he said, half-doubtingly:

“But you are going to be a good girl now, Mary, and not going to break my heart, and kill me as you've been doing? Eh?”

Mary sought to turn his thoughts, and pressed her quivering lips to his cheek as she murmured fresh words of love and happiness. But the old man was now roused, and all his thoughts were turned with renewed strength into the old, selfish channel.

“Ah! kisses are all very well,” he exclaimed, “but they won't do for everything;—they won't pay for disobedience and wilfulness. But you'll be a good girl now, I know, and not vex your father any more.”

Still she made no reply—how could she? and her hope again turning to fear, she strove to linger out yet the dear moments of troubled pleasure that were hers in being with him.

“Dearest father,” she said at length, lovingly, “let us talk of yourself now; and you will let me sit by you, and read to you, and walk with you—”

“Don't go on talking so,” he exclaimed, his sharp tone returning, and the angry twinkle of his eye; “but tell me at once, whether you will do as I desire or not. I'm not going to be played the fool with. Will you do as I desire you, and marry this excellent man, or are you as obstinate and evil-minded as ever?”

“My father!” she faltered out, “my father! think what it is you ask of me. For life—think! for life to be with one I cannot love, and to be separated from him I love. Think how he saved our lives when we were so near perishing. And you let it go on, dear father,—living together—being always together! Oh! you could not part us now; you could not—could not—could not part us now!” And her head dropped heavily on his breast again.

"I—I don't know what—what you are talking about," said the old man troubled and confused; "only you *must* mind what I say—I will have it—I will have it—"

The door-bell rang; all of them started. The old woman having answered it, came back with a triumphant air.

"Lady Davenport's compliments, and she had called in her way home to ask how General and Miss Sydney were, and if agreeable she would be with them in an hour's time."

"Certainly—certainly," said General Sydney, trembling from head to foot, yet half relieved at thinking that she was come back to take part of the responsibility of his acts off his hands.

"Now, Mary," he continued, quivering with rage and fear, "you answer me directly, and say you will do what I desire. If you don't, you go back to your room, and never see me again."

She seemed incapable of speaking. The old woman came near as if to take her from him.

"Yes—yes," he exclaimed, "take her away—take her away, she is a wicked girl—a wicked girl."

But when Mary felt the woman trying to take her away, her weakened muscles seemed endowed with renewed strength, and she clasped her hands round her father with frantic force. But when separated from him at last by their united efforts, and the old woman bore her off—overcome by the intolerable agony of her feelings, she fainted, and in that state was carried upstairs.

The woman laid her on her bed, and administering a restorative, watched her till she seemed somewhat recovered; when observing the state of confusion of the furniture in the little closet, she went to see what could be the matter. In an instant the mode of escape was made clear to her. She stood petrified with horror! Then sitting down in a chair, she covered her face with her apron, and burst into a flood of tears.

She could now account for the earth-stains and streaks of green and brown she had observed upon the poor girl's dress and hands, and that dark livid bruise upon her temple—she had fallen from the roof—that tender, delicate girl! She turned sick at the bare thought; and something of an idea of what the feelings must have been which made her dare such a risk, gleamed dimly on her mind. And it was to get to her father, not to fly from him! Again her tears flowed as she thought of that, and as the agonized countenance of the poor girl rose reproachingly before her. For the first time she seemed to feel what a cruel part was being acted. Mary's words to her father, too, had told her what had been kept sedulously from her by Lady Davenport when she had put her into her partial confidence and secured

her interest in her plans:—namely, that there was another, and a beloved lover, who was to be abandoned and lost, if Captain Normanton was to succeed; and dry and hard as her nature had seemed, there was still enough of the woman's heart left within her to make her feel what such a sacrifice must be.

She replaced the furniture with trembling hands, and having by a furtive glance, ascertained that Mary was quite conscious again, she stole away lest her unwonted meltings should be observed, and reluctantly, and with scarcely a sound, locked the door again after her.

CHAPTER LVII.

Hear me, O my God! in my extremest need;
I send my soul to Thee in passionate prayer,
Before the footstool of Thy heavenly throne.

SCHILLER.

MARY sat up in her bed, but felt quite bewildered. The great bodily exertion she had used in getting out of the window—the terror as well as hurts and bruises of her fall—the agony at the sight of her father's misery—and, not least,—his sending her from him again, altogether seemed more than her nature could endure. She looked piteously around her as if to ask for help where there was none, and overcome by the anguish of her desolation, she moaned forth: "No one to speak for me!—no one to help me!"

She shuddered; then rising hurriedly, and falling on her knees, prayed long and agonizedly, and with hands strained together seemed wrestling with God, for strength, and wisdom, and guidance. When she rose, it was as if her mind was clear and decided. She seemed to have taken some determinate resolution, though she was pale as death, and shook as with the palsy. She got to her chair—though forced to stay herself by everything she passed, so weak she was; and strove to get warmth in her, and to still her shaking hands and trembling lips, through which the cold breath seemed to come like an ice-blast.

A gentle knock,—a gentle turning of the key, and Lady Davenport all at once appeared, armed with smiles and winning sweetness. But all her affectations were scattered in a moment, at the sight of Mary's deathly countenance.

"My dear child!" she exclaimed, hastening to her, "you are not well."

Mary shook her head, but her lips refused a sound. Lady Davenport was really shocked and terrified at her appearance, and felt that matters must be brought speedily to a close, or it might be a fatal one for her; and she determined to use all her powers once more, to induce her to yield to their wishes,—still trying to convince herself that then all would be well.

"I know what this is, my dear," she said, soothingly, holding Mary's hands between her own to try and restore some warmth to them; "your father has told me of your having gone down to him, and I do not wonder at your feeling so much at his having sent you from him again. I am so sorry!—but I felt sure how it would be. He will kill himself rather than give way, he is so determined that you should escape the fate you wish to plunge yourself into. My dear Mary—I must call you so," and she put her arm round her, and drew her tenderly to rest her head upon her shoulder—(she had scarce power to resist)—"you will obey and please him; you will give new life to us all, and change this sad state of things into happiness and joy. Tell me—whisper to me that you will, and in a moment your father will hold you to his heart again as his own dear child."

Mary with an effort disengaged herself from her, and leaning on the arm of the chair, buried her face in her hands.

"My dear love," continued Lady Davenport, scarcely able to restrain her impatience, yet still speaking in the gentlest tone, "put an end, I beseech you, to all this cruel delay, and prove yourself still the sweet amiable creature we have always thought you. Let me—let me tell your father you are willing to please him." She waited some moments, then playfully added: "Well then, I shall take your silence for consent." She paused—and Mary was still silent.

Lady Davenport's heart actually ceased beating, so ecstatic was her delight—and so sudden seemed the relief at last from all her anxieties.

"My dearest child!" she exclaimed, rising and throwing her arms again round the miserable girl; "my dearest child! Now you are indeed the sweetest, and best of children. And now your father will come and bless his darling once more."

And kissing her with real affection, she went to the door, intending to call General Sydney; but she suddenly turned back—for she dreaded leaving Mary time for thought—and seating herself again by her side, said:

"But now, before I go for him, my dear love, let us finish all arrangements. Prolonged intercourse under existing circumstances can, you will feel, only be painful and embarrassing; so I ask you, as a great favour—let the event take place as soon possible—directly—even—why not—to-day?"

Mary still kept her face hid in her hands.

"Delay," continued Lady Davenport, "can, as I said, but prolong suffering; and if you were to see my poor brother, I am sure you would feel what he has suffered,—health—spirits—life almost—gone. Your father too—yourself!—Come, come! you will be a good dear girl in this too, and then we shall all begin to breathe and recover ourselves a little. Everything you know can be ready in an hour or two; and it can take place all so quietly in the drawing-room, no fuss, no——"

"Here?" gasped Mary.

"It would be much quieter here, my dear. So all is now settled, and I will go and tell the good news to your father, and to my dear, poor, desponding brother, and then come back—and the toilet will soon be accomplished."

And gaily rising, she descended to inform General Sydney, and took him up crying with delight, to Mary, who submitted without word, or tear, or smile, to his caresses and commendations, seeming indeed almost past feeling, capable only of simple endurance.

Arrived at Lorrington, Lady Davenport flew into her brother's arms, and in a burst of joyful tears, told him of Mary's consent. Mary's consent? Impossible!

Tremblings seized him, and he would have fallen to the ground had she not supported him, such a thunder-stroke did it fall upon his heart.

Mary's consent!—that for which he had laboured ceaselessly, almost sleeplessly, for long, long months—that for which he had made shipwreck of principle, honour, conscience—that which he had looked to as the only star that could make bright his path in life—there it was—he had it! And what was it to him? The death-blow to crush him to the earth—the climax of his iniquities—the seal of his guilt, his misery!

His first impulse was to say, "I will not have it!" But he had given himself into the hands of one who is a hard, hard master, and who "led him captive at his will;" and writhing under the stings of conscience, grovelling under the horror of self-contempt, he was driven forward in the path of crime, all power of virtue denied him. Oh! true the words which say:

"There lies thy cross, beneath it meekly bow,
It suits thy stature now;
Who scornful pass it with averted eye,
"Twill crush him by-and-by!"

Oh! for the lost power of virtue! What would he not now have given to have stood on its bright enimence! What would

Mary's loss then have been compared with now so winning her?

Lady Davenport was surprised and distressed at seeing his emotion; but she told herself it was only the effect of sudden happiness on his worn spirits, and he had long felt that she was not one to whom he could go even with his best thoughts—and how could he go now, oppressed with guilt?

Strange! that to Him who is without sin alone can we go to find sympathy in our sins—that to the All-Pure alone can we dare open the secrets of our erring lives!

"Christ does not desert us, even when we sin. Alas! if He did! Alas! if we had only a sunshine God, who forsook us when the dark cloud overwhelmed!" Alas, indeed! He would have left us soon, and for ever! Yet who but He would stay by us at such times? Constraining motive to sin no more!

But of Him, Captain Normanton thought not. He was not one to whom the promise belonged: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Though his soul had at times been touched by Mary's high and heavenly thoughts, yet the evil within him had been too strong to allow of such feelings being then more than as the "morning cloud," or the "early dew," and they had passed, and left his spirit dry and barren as before.

In unspeakable wretchedness he now paced the room, while Lady Davenport, stealing anxious glances at him from time to time, sat at the writing-table inventing a letter to the good old clergyman of Lorrington. She stated, without any remorse, "that an engagement had subsisted for some time between her brother and Miss Sydney, but that it had not been talked of, and the marriage had not taken place, on account of her delicate health. But that Captain Normanton having suddenly to go abroad on business, without a day's delay, had persuaded her to go with him, in hope of the climate's benefiting her, and that therefore they requested his kind services to perform the marriage ceremony in an hour's time."

This note despatched, and an acquiescing answer received, Lady Davenport prepared to return to the Park House, having ordered the carriages, and done everything else that was required.

"You will dress and follow me soon, Sigismund," she said, as he still perturbedly walked to and fro.

"Dress!" he exclaimed, in a tone that seemed to feel the injunction a mockery.

"Yes, my dear, you can't be married in black. I've changed my things."

He glanced a moment at her gay attire, and turned sickening away. Sackcloth! ashes! those were what he would have chosen for his adornments!

"Very well," he said gloomily. And she left him—lifting up her hands and eyes in provocation that what she had procured at such great price, should be so ungraciously received.

Yet it was not repentance—that "gift of God to the *pardoned* soul"—that this unhappy man felt at that dreadful moment—it was remorse, and self-loathing, and consciousness of things that degraded him in his own eyes even to the dust. He writhed under the tyranny of feelings that would not let him do what his better nature yet told him there was still time to do, and he cursed again and again the weakness of his soul. It was no bright perspective of happiness, as of old, which lured him on—holding out pictures of affection won by love like his, and all the charms of dear domestic life!—no! Mary's words hung hauntingly over his memory, and rushed as a flame-breath over his heart:—"What happiness—what blessing can you expect?"—It was as much cowardice as strength that held him to his purpose. He feared his sister—her taunts and reproaches; and a vain-glorious pride too, made it insufferable to him not to carry through what he had once pledged himself to do, and to have it appear in the eyes of the many who he was aware knew of his attachment, that he had failed in his object.

These were the poor motives which, together with the helpless impossibility of giving Mary up, drove him on, though they could not silence the crying voice within. He dared not think of Mary; and when the thought of her injured lover crossed his brain it was madness!

Wretched godless mortals! how often do ye pursue a thing to the brink of a precipice, and then when ye would draw back, find yourselves hurled over its fatal steeps! How often obtain the object of your wishes—snatch the fruit ye have desired, and find it "turn to ashes on your lips."

Oh! for a godly aim, godlily pursued! for human love, carried out in the love of God!

There was no time however, for thought, had he wished to think. His sister had told him how, to give a plausibility to the hurried marriage, she had said he had to go abroad; and he had therefore to give hasty orders on the subject. Then, almost distracted, he changed his dress; and throwing himself into his carriage, drove to the Park House. Oh! would the lightning shatter him! the thunderbolt strike him to earth! how would he bless them!

Lady Davenport meanwhile had returned to the Sydneys, and had busied herself with arranging Mary's toilet. She herself was incapable of speaking, almost of moving. Unresistingly she

let them dress her beautiful hair, put on her, her wedding garments of white, her orange wreath, and bridal veil; and when ready, she sat there perfectly inanimate, save when a momentary contraction of the brow showed that thought still lived within. She might have served for a model of the beautiful, unfortunate Inez de Castro, sitting, dead, in her festal raiment.

At length the carriages arrived. Without a word, Lady Davenport gently took Mary's arm, and led her downstairs—the old woman supporting her on the other side.

Mary felt her tremble, and in surprise turned her eyes on her for a moment, when the look of sorrow and sympathy which she received, well-nigh overcame her. She answered it with a grateful, quivering smile—for though marvelling at the change, she felt that there was true feeling there, and the expression of her large, melancholy eyes, was softened for a moment. But she shook off the weakness and nerved herself again for her difficult task.

Captain Normanton had expressed it as his wish that the marriage should not take place in the house but in the village church, and it was therefore so decided. It was arranged that the younger servant should go with Mary for the time as her attendant, and she was to join her at the church; and the old woman, whose feelings were now painfully interested in the gentle girl whose too willing oppressor she had been before, determined to accompany her there, to see the end of the sad affair. Such things as could be hastily packed had been put upon the travelling-chariot; the rest was to come in a few days with Lady Davenport and General Sydney, who were to follow.

Captain Normanton had got out at the Park House—he could not meet Mary. He sat buried in the corner of the carriage till General Sydney joined him—Mary and Lady Davenport going in Lady Davenport's carriage. For an instant he raised his eyes, as he supported Mary from the carriage, at the church-yard gate. He had not seen her for some weeks—weeks to her of imprisonment and horrible misery—imprisonment which he had allowed, misery which he had caused—and the change in her was fearful. He became dizzy and confused. Yet was there but little of tender regret in his feelings—rather, bitter irritation that she should have been willing to endure all this rather than become his wife.

Her arm was put within her father's, but Lady Davenport was forced to sustain her on the other side, for the old man, with his unsteady steps, was no support to her. Captain Normanton came after them along the narrow pathway, rather as if following the funeral of his love, than going with her to the altar. There was no one in the church-yard nor in the church, excepting the

two servants, for scarcely any one knew what was going to take place. The clerk opened the church-door for them; and when he shut it again, and the hollow sound ran howling through the cold and empty place, every heart in that mournful party shuddered as it had been the portal of the vault that had closed upon them.

CHAPTER LVIII.

What ! married ? married ?
 Lost to thy dear, thy faithful Tancred,
 Lost for ever ?

Tancred and Sigismunda.

MRS. ST. CLAIR'S distress all this long time may well be imagined, at receiving no tidings of Mary; and she had no clue to discovering where she was. Having expected to hear from her in a day or two, she had at first been perfectly satisfied; and when she began to be uneasy, it was too late to be able to track her progress.

Mr. Bruce too had been absent at the time, and knew not of her departure till some weeks after it had taken place. Then he too felt alarmed, when he found that no tidings had been heard of her; but with a sailor's quick perception of the best thing to do, he returned to London directly, and when there, went from banker to banker till he found the one who was employed by General Sydney, thinking he would certainly know his direction—but he did not, for some time, as we have seen. When at length he learned it from Lady Davenport, he immediately wrote to inform Mr. Bruce, as the latter had begged he would; but he being again absent from town, the letter went from place to place without reaching him.

He called again however at the banker's when he returned to town; and was overjoyed at receiving at last the desired direction. The banker then laughingly mentioned what Lady Davenport had said concerning General Sydney's fortune—adding also what he had told her in return. Mr. Bruce's surprise was unbounded!—unbounded too the joy with which he heard what must so materially add to the happiness of those he loved.

He set off instantly for Lorrington; and having dismissed his chaise at the town a few miles off, he proceeded there on foot. The name of the place bore no enlightenment to him, for he did not know that it was Captain Normanton's, nor could he have

imagined them capable of such an audacious step as taking Mary there.

It was a lovely day, and the elastic air sent him bounding along, for he felt unusually light-hearted at having at length discovered Mary's retreat,—at the joyful news he had to tell her,—and at the prospect of the pleasure—dangerous indeed, but so great!—of seeing her again. The sun shone brightly on his path, and his animated eye roved delightedly over the beauties of the country—already beginning stealthily to robe itself here and there in its fresh mantle of green,—and over that splendid park, with whose possessor he little dreamed he was acquainted.

Turning out of a lane, he came suddenly upon the little church. It was quite apart from the village; no house near, but the parsonage, which was quite close. Two carriages—one with its four horses, evidently intended for a journey—were standing by the gate, the servants belonging to them being at that moment busily engaged in pinning on their favours—for even at that moment of haste and confusion Lady Davenport had found time to think of them. Not a suspicion crossed his mind;—how should it?

"Gay doings," he said with his sunny smile, addressing a solitary old woman who was leaning with her arms on the low church-yard wall.

"That's as it may be," she replied, shaking her head; "things isn't always as they seem."

"But why should you doubt this?"

"I've heard things as makes me, though I've always found the gentleman a worthy gentleman too. But they say as the father's pressed it too much on the poor young thing, and my lady too; and she's not one as'll be gainsayed any how."

Big drops of terror burst from the young man's brow.

"Woman!" he exclaimed choking; "who are they?"

She turned round surprised, and angry too, as his powerful hand shook the spare shoulder on which it was laid; but the look of agony in that fine countenance chased all other thoughts.

"Dear me!" she said with much feeling, "who'd 'a thought as you'd 'a cared—stranger-like as you seem."

"Who are they?" he reiterated fiercely.

"It's Captain Normanton then, as has the fine house there, and Miss Sydney as came here this——"

His hands were on the wall and he was in the act of springing furiously over it, when she stopped him, laying her withered hand on his shoulder now.

"Bless you! don't go now," she said; "they're a coming out you see—too late to do noth'n now."

And the church-door opened, and the clanging bells burst forth.

It was then he felt indeed too late! He could not see them. He rushed away as if pursued by some avenging demon, till finding a gate open into a field he turned into it, and when hid from the road by some stacks which were there, threw himself on the ground in a frenzy of agony too terrible to be endured. Oh! how his still unchastened spirit made him curse the ruthless unrelenting man who had hunted down and seized his prey with such remorseless grasp,—and the weak father who, in his cruelty and selfishness, had sacrificed his child for his own pleasure,—and that frail and faithless child who by any force, by any guile could have been made to renounce her love, and wreck, not only her own happiness, but that of the dearest friend he had in life. His very heart was pierced with anguish as he thought of him, and of what his intolerable sufferings would be. He knew his generous nature; knew the tenderness which blended with his high chivalrous courage and was so peculiar a beauty in his character, knew too what his sufferings would be at her misery. Oh! how could she have so betrayed—so abandoned one who had in her such implicit trust, who cherished for her such unbounded love!

“‘Frailty thy name is woman!’” he exclaimed, as he started up, and stamped on the ground in his ungoverned wrath.

But even then he could not do her the injustice to believe that the mere gifts of fortune—the beauties of the place he had admired so much in coming when he knew not to whom it belonged, but which now seemed more hideous to him than the pit of Avernus—that these things could have weighed with her against tried affection—that heart’s best earthly home!

No! he only thought that, wearied with persecution and suffering, she had weakly yielded at last to the evil influence of those around her, and to obtain a momentary peace, had wrecked her real peace for ever.

“Could she not have endured a little longer,” he thought, “for the sake of such a future?—for the sake of such a trusting, noble heart as St. Clair’s?”

Alas! he knew not what had been her trials—what her sufferings!

But the bells had ceased; and now were heard the quick sharp ringing of hoofs, and the crackling rush of wheels on the frosty ground. He started forward, impelled by a mad desire to throw himself in their way, and, if looks could blast, to blast them by his glance of unmeasured scorn and hatred. But happily the carriage passed not by that way, and the sounds died off in the distance. Then he remembered that he had a hard

and bitter task before him, which he must set himself to perform. He must not let this fatal news reach his friend, or poor Mrs. St. Clair through the cold, hard medium of the public papers; he must go to the latter directly, and they must advise together as to the best means of breaking the miserable event to her son. He left the field, and pursued his way through the lanes and roads without once raising his eyes on a scene now so blasting to his sight. Her's were now those hills, those woods, those luxuries of art and nature! "Better, happier far," his heart exclaimed, "a hut on the sea-beat shore, with peace, and love, and truth!"

He travelled all that night, and early the next morning reached Mrs. St. Clair's.

Messengers of bad tidings in the East, come with rent garments, and ashes on their heads. Alas! it needed no such adventitious signs to convey all terror to the anxious mother when he appeared before her—his heart was rent, the ashes were on his cheek. He could not speak.

"My son?" she cried, when she saw him,—in wild alarm.

He shook his head.

"Mary?—dead?"

"Worse." And he buried his face in his hands, and threw himself down in a chair, overwhelmed as with the shame and misery of our fallen nature.

She quietly sat down—her hands before her. There seemed to be a pause in her whole being, a space of complete vacuum. Her breath came not, her heart stopped its beating, her mind became quite blank. She could not think *that*, and she could think nothing else. Mr. Bruce rose after a few moments, and grasping her hand, said in a low hollow voice, "How shall we ever tell him?"

"Tell him—what?" she said, looking up into his agitated countenance, and endeavoured to believe that she did not understand *that*, the horrible conviction of which she yet felt stealing over her.

"I cannot name it," he said; "you must know what it is."

She clasped her hands, and sinking on her knees, hiding her face on the sofa, seemed lost for a time in prayer. When she rose, she held out her cold trembling hand to him.

"Forgive me," she said, in a voice so changed he almost started at it, "I could not speak to you then; but I have looked beyond this wretched world, for him, and all is still bright and joyful there. And it was she who taught me to feel that! Oh! what a world this is!"

They sat in miserable consultation for a time; and at last Mr.

Bruce said the best thing would be for him if possible to go out to Mr. St. Clair, and break it to him as best he might. This was therefore determined on; and knowing that a freshly commissioned ship was under orders to relieve one of those on that station, he said he would start directly, that no chance and no time might be lost.

When he arrived at Portsmouth, he met Captain Seymour; and telling him his wishes, though not the reason of them—he could not have breathed the words to have saved his existence—he kindly undertook to get a passage for him in the ———, and told him it was well he had not lost time, as the vessel was just getting under way.

CHAPTER LIX.

His blood our peace,—His intercession our comfort,—His word our warrant,—His grace our strength,—His sympathy our support,—His speedy coming our hope.—REV. J. C. RYLE.

A MISERABLE voyage Mr. Bruce had, weighed down as he was with the terrible secret within him. When last he had ploughed those Atlantic waves, *they* had been with him, so happy! And though his own heart had seemed heavy enough then, what was that to what he felt now? His piety, true and sincere, was still immature, and he could not yet rest his own sorrows, nor those of the hearts he loved so much, on the compassions of his God. He had learnt to think with less harshness of the unfortunate girl whom yet he too deeply loved, but found that his compassion made his sorrow only the greater.

As the vessel drew near her destination, his horror at having to communicate his fearful intelligence became perfect agony; and he felt almost a dreadful hope that in that deadly clime his friend might have passed away from this evil world ere he had learnt how evil it could be—blest in his trust of her he loved on earth, blest in his trust in Him he loved in Heaven.

He really dared not meet the first burst of his wretchedness; and felt too that the unexpected sight of him, and his betraying countenance would at once bring despair to his heart, so judged it best to write a few words in addition to those Mrs. St. Clair had hurriedly written, determining to send them to the ship before he went thither himself.

His heart quite sickened as they came in sight of the vessel, as she lay motionless on the fervid waters of the bay; and giving his letters to the man who was to take the bag on board, he went

below, and with earnest prayers and supplications sought strength and comfort for him, so sorely tried.

A painful yet curious sight it was, on that vessel's deck, as the boat from the new comer rowed towards her, and the man with the bag mounted her side.

It was some months since any news had been received from England; and in that time what might not have happened!

Faces with every shade of anxiety were there watching the distribution of the letters and eyes straining to read far-off directions, and hands stretched forth above and through the throng that crowded around. Some indeed, were standing aloof, laughing at an eagerness they could not then understand; while others walked away sickening with the feeling that they had sorrows no news, no letters could assuage.

It was at the time that Mr. St. Clair was recovering from the effects of the fever, that the ship arrived, and being still very weak, and feeling dizzy with his hopes and fears, he had not been able to press forward amongst the others, but had commissioned Edward Somerville to see if there were any letters for him. The boy came back in a few minutes waving his letters over his head in triumph, having got those for Mr. St. Clair, and one from *that* brother, for himself. He gave Mr. St. Clair his, and was standing at his side, devouring his own with eyes and heart and soul, when he heard a cry,—and Mr. St. Clair lay stretched on the deck at his side. He called for help in consternation and alarm, and many soon came to his assistance; when seeing the letter—the one from Mr. Bruce—still open in his hand, he snatched it up before any one else could observe it, and folding it up, put it in his pocket with quick intuitive sense and delicacy of feeling.

Fit after fit came over that distracted mind; the fever returned with double force upon him—sorrow—that ready preparer for sickness—making him but too much fitted to receive its renewed and deadly attacks. Mr. Bruce came on board soon after he had sent his letter; and though it was with so heavy a heart he mounted the ship's side, yet all previous sorrow was as nothing compared to the anguish with which he saw his friend in his delirious state, battling between life and death. As he looked on him, and met the gaze of those eyes formerly so eloquent in their varied expression, now fixed in blank unconsciousness or glaring with fierce wildness—his slight form a perfect skeleton, and his voice the hollow, horrifying one of “moody madness,”—and thought too of what the return of consciousness must bring to him should he survive, he could

not but feel what mercy it would be if he were thus early snatched from this stormy world, and allowed to enter in peace that calm "haven where he would be." But yet he loved him so much! His poor mother too!

It was decided that Mr. St. Clair should return in the ship that was homeward-bound, as his only chance for life, and Mr. Bruce easily obtained permission to accompany him. Poor Edward Somerville was broken-hearted at having to part with him in that state; and before he went, he delivered into Mr. Bruce's hands the letter (his own letter) carefully sealed up, begging him to assure Mr. St. Clair, should consciousness ever return, that no syllable of it had been seen by living soul. Mr. Bruce was touched and pleased by the boy's honourable feeling, and by his deep affection for his friend, and promised to write by the first opportunity, and tell him how it fared with him whom they both loved with so deep a regard.

As they gained fresher latitudes, the fever gradually diminished, though leaving its victim in a state of prostration that was wretched to behold. He could not stir or lift a hand; his weakness was that of an infant.

Child-like also, yet most manly, was his perfect submission to the will of his Heavenly Father. Many messages had passed between his soul and his God through the hours of his fearful deliriums and death-like trances. The mind had slept indeed, but the soul had been awake, and in its disentangled state had fed at the fountain-head of God's eternal peace. "So He giveth it His beloved, sleeping."

His murmured words were continually addressed to God; and when Mr. Bruce spoke to him on heavenly subjects, he always became calm and tranquil.

"Don't talk to him of those things now," said the captain of the ship one day.

"By all means let him," exclaimed the surgeon; "it has the best possible effect."

He spoke merely of the physical effect—he was a stranger to the deeper good produced; but he was perfectly right—it did for the sufferer, by soothing his mind, more than all his medicines could effect.

He was so calm, when his senses were quite restored, that Mr. Bruce thought it impossible he could have retained the memory of what had occurred, and dreaded that he had still the fearful task before him of breaking it to him. But he was mistaken. Mr. St. Clair was perfectly conscious of what had taken place—of the event which had made his life a blank; but

there was no rebellion in his heart, so in its deep oppression there was yet calm and peace.

"Oh Lord my God! do Thou thy holy will!"

That, in noble faith, was his soul's language; and the answer was: "Peace."

A new source too of more than peace—of high transcendent joy, had been in secret opened to him, during those hours closed to outward impressions. From the first dawn of heavenly things in his heart his course had been marked, as has been said, by the most spiritual tenderness of conscience. Every fresh ray of light had shown him more and more of God's pure and holy nature, and his soul had panted to live up to the bright standard set before it. But the very ardour of his desire to do so had made him fearful of his own state when he saw how often he failed and how far his practice was behind his high aspirations, and this had constantly troubled his mind, and he had often feared that Heaven could not be for such as he was; and though he spoke the thorough conviction of his soul to others, when he exhorted them to a full belief in the all-efficacious atonement made by the Lord Jesus for their sins, yet he had never been able to lay firm hold of that atonement for himself.

"The Christian Pilgrim," says Coleridge, "sets out in the morning twilight, while yet the truth of 'the perfect law of liberty' is below the horizon." This had been perfectly true of him; but now it was "twilight" no longer—the full glory of the Gospel had risen upon his soul. He could now not only look up and say, with filial love, "My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth;" but he could also claim Christ as his Redeemer, and feel that he had, through Him, "passed from death unto life."

The glow of joy that this conviction sent through his heart none can conceive but those who have felt it! His soul thrilled with strange emotion as Mr. Bruce told him of the things he had said when in his wandering state of mind, and of the powerful effect which God's Word had had upon him. He knew that there could be no self-deception there, for he was unconscious of all that had passed; and he felt that God was therefore openly, blessedly owning him as His son, before men on earth—before the angels in Heaven. His soul rested with assured repose upon that blessed certainty; and he entered indeed into "the joy of his Lord."

The strongest conviction possessed his soul that Mary could not have outlived the trial that had fallen upon her; and in his

deep affection, he felt that he could sustain his own solitary burthen when she was in such glorious happiness. That thought gave him strength to endure,—but for that, he felt he could not have lived.

It was the expression of this conviction which first showed Mr. Bruce that he had a clear knowledge of what had occurred. He had seemed conscious for some time but had never spoken or stirred; but then he faintly pressed his friend's hand, and looked up with a calm smile.

"She is happy," he murmured; "she could not live; God has taken her."

These his first conscious words completely overcame Mr. Bruce; and amidst his joy at the hope of his friend's recovery, his soul bowed in contrition when he remembered the fierce anger and un pitying scorn with which he had at first poured forth his relentless indignation against the unhappy girl.

From that time Mr. St. Clair often spoke of her, and always either with the tenderest feeling and gentlest compassion, or with glad thankfulness that for her, the trials of life were for ever past. As his strength increased however, his own sense of sorrow and desolation could not but increase too; but it was never mingled with repining. When first indeed, the full feeling of it rushed upon him, it overpowered him for a moment. The endeared past! the dreadful present! the desert future!—He gave a loud and bitter cry; then all was hushed again, and he lay tranquil at his Saviour's feet—His gracious hand again laid with blessing on his head.

"How wonderful is the love of God!" he said one day as he lay on the deck gaining strength by the increasing freshness of the more northern breezes—"to pour into my soul the conviction,—now that she is gone—that I too shall surely go to that bright heaven of His. Had my old fears remained, what should I have done?"

"Do you feel so certain?" asked Mr. Bruce. "I did so once; but now—!"

"Now! why not now?"

"I scarcely know; but I hardly think Heaven can be composed of such beings as I am, and I almost fear at times that my former faith was all delusion."

"I am confident it was not!" exclaimed Mr. St. Clair warmly. "I now know more than ever that it was not. But perhaps Bruce, it is that you do not seek enough the evidence of salvation in the fruits of the Spirit—not feel enough that the credit of Christ's religion rests with you, before those who see you. I

remember a passage in a book that struck me much: 'The world cares little for doctrine—the world knows nothing of experience—but the world can understand a close walk with God.'

"I dare say it is so," said the other—"I am sure it is so; but somehow I don't think of these things at the time, though I am sorry enough when I feel I have done wrong."

"If we watch ourselves we shall feel that God is working in us as He does in none but His own. Now that I feel the blood of the atonement cleansing my conscience—now that I can enjoy the assurance of being justified and accepted through Him whose mighty mercies have sought and found me,—oh! it is such a motive for holiness—such a deep, deep reason to strive to please that gracious Being who bought us by His own bitter sufferings! It is such a strength in our trials—such a comfort—oh God, how needed! in our afflictions." And his head drooped heavily back on his pillow.

"The sight of you is a perpetual reproach to me, St. Clair," said his friend.

"Oh! if you knew what a fire I still feel in my heart, Bruce, you would not say that. If it were not for God's hand in mercy perpetually pressing it down, I should go mad."

"I've wondered often you are not so."

"Ah! I have scarcely yet entered on my trial, and if I dared doubt Him whose mercy has been so great, I should say I dreaded from my soul setting foot on shore again. I have hardly yet mixed in the world where—she—is not, I have lived in the bright world where she is; and to know her,—so loved!—so loved! free from all suffering, all sorrow—oh! that is joy unspeakable!"

"You cannot, however, be sure of it, St. Clair," said Mr. Bruce in a low voice.

"Don't say so!" he exclaimed, starting up wildly, his eyes flashing fire and his breast heaving to suffocation—"don't shake that belief, or you'll drive me indeed mad. Oh! do you not remember how changed she was—how thin, how pale—even during those few weeks of my first absence, and do you think she could have sustained all she must have gone through since? No!" he murmured more calmly, as he sank back again exhausted—"no; she is beyond the reach of trouble,—

"Of all that can disturb
The tranquil soul's repose."

He lay some time with his eyes shut, and with a look of ineffable peace upon his countenance. At length, looking up, he said in a low tone, that seemed to borrow melody from the subject of his thoughts:

"How solemn, yet how blest a thing is death!—joining all in us that is worthy of God here, to all the happy, happy future! How well I remember speaking with her of these things, and her wondering that creatures such as we were should be admitted to the society of those on high. Now she is there—and soon I shall join her.—But," he added after a time, turning to Mr. Bruce with an expression of wonderful elevation in his eyes, "I cannot say what I feel for *him*. His must be such deadly agony 'without God, without hope in the world.'"

"He has but what he has deserved, and has brought upon himself," replied the other sternly.

"Ah! if God dealt with us all as we deserved, where should we be? I can but continually entreat Heaven for him. It is a beautiful thought:

" 'That thou may'st pray for them, thy foes are given.' "

CHAPTER LX.

There are swift hours in life,—strong rushing hours
That do the work of tempests in their might.

MRS. HEMANS.

WHEN that hollow-sounding solemn door had closed upon the wretched wedding party, they advanced to the communion-table. Lady Davenport stood by Mary, and put her arm round her to support her; but she withdrew herself, and with a great effort stood trembling, alone. Captain Normanton seemed almost as much agitated as herself—anger, and pride, and love, and remorse, all struggling within him; and when the words came: "Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife?" he could scarcely find voice to answer: "I will."

The old minister then turning his benign countenance to Mary, asked her the corresponding question. She fixed her full intense eyes upon him, as if life were concentrating its last rays in one expiring flash; and with the force of death grasping his arm, which—seeing her agitation and the ghastly pallor of her face he had involuntarily stretched out towards her—she faintly exclaimed: "No!—save me," and dropped senseless on the steps.

Lady Davenport, though exceedingly terrified, instantly exclaimed: "It is merely agitation—only agitation; she has been ill—a little water will revive her, and then you can go on."

"No—no," exclaimed breathless voices from behind—those of the little maid and the old woman, who rushed up, and striving

to raise the unfortunate girl, protested against the clergyman's going on.

Mary's eyes continued closed—dead or alive they knew not. The old minister in excessive alarm and agitation desired them to carry her to his house, and they raised her up with the assistance of Lady Davenport—the wretched father standing by, helplessly wringing his hands. The clerk opened the vestry door and they were about to carry her in, when Captain Normanton, who had till then stood immovable palsied with horror looking on with vacant gaze,—rushed forward. He put them all aside, and taking Mary from them, raised her slight form in his arms. He spoke no word, nor breathed one sigh; but carried her gently, as a mother would her weakling child, along the little secluded path that led to the clergyman's house, and there laid her on a sofa which the old man had prepared. He knelt down beside her, holding one of her small cold hands between his own deathly ones, and looked on in mute horror while the others were endeavouring to restore animation. For a time all seemed vain; but at length there came a long-drawn, quivering sigh. Lady Davenport then dismissed the servants, telling them to desire that the carriages should come round there.

It was their opening the church-door which had caused Mr. Bruce to rush away in such agony and occasioned the ill-timed chiming of the bells—the ringers supposing that all had gone off prosperously. From such small mistakes do great sufferings often proceed!

Gradually did consciousness dawn again upon Mary's mind; but her previous weakness had been so great, that for a time she was incapable of the slightest exertion. Captain Normanton motioned his sister to leave him with her, and she retired to the further end of the room, where covering her face, she gave way to torrents of tears at the thought of his agony and of the ruin that she had wrought for him. General Sydney sat stupefied and bewildered by the fire—the kind old clergyman beside him lost in painful consternation at the unexpected misery that had arisen where all had seemed to promise so different a result. Though living so near, no hint of the truth had ever reached him. Little indeed was actually known beyond the walls of the Park House, for the old woman, who had for so long been completely in Lady Davenport's interest, had prevented the younger one from having any intercourse with the village; and the suspicions which yet did get abroad respecting Mary's ill-treatment were never breathed to the old minister, whose benign nature made every one unwilling to disturb him by bringing to him any evil report.

A heavy silence reigned in the apartment for some time, broken only by Lady Davenport's suffocating sobs. Mary at length feebly opened her eyes; when seeing Captain Normanton by her side, she shuddered with involuntary terror.

Then burst over him the full torrent of his grief;—not indeed for his blasted hopes—for amid the wild confusion of his mind he was yet conscious of infinite relief in having been saved that great crime—but it was,—oh! who can say what it was not—of agony, of hopeless remorse—without one ray of comfort—one sustaining consciousness of rectitude—conscience, tortured to madness by a thousand stings, overwhelming him with all its horrors! The sight of his victim as she lay there before him hovering between life and death—her mocking wreath lying beside her, and the disordered folds of her white veil falling around her, mingling its soft drapery with her waving hair—the look of death that rested on that pale cheek, so sunk as to make her dark beautiful eyes look unnaturally large—all smote him to the heart. And when,—her hair streaming from her uncovered brow,—he caught sight of the purple bruise upon her temple, speaking as he thought of actual violence, tremblings seized him—all her wrongs seemed to rise fearfully before him; and remembering her gentleness, her patience, her sweetness—feeling too what extremity of suffering there must have been to have forced one so timid, so shrinking, to throw herself on the mercy and protection of a stranger, his whole being gave way, and melting with a tenderness, a grief, a remorse, an agony uncontrollable, the tears gushed out from his very soul, and he raised such a cry as went through the hearts of all who heard him. He took Mary's clay-cold hand again within his own, and pressing it to his heart, wept over her tears of an unspeakable anguish, entreating her to live, to look up once more—once more to speak, and say that she forgave him.

Lady Davenport's agony at seeing him was beyond endurance. She dared not approach him in his mighty grief; and unable longer even to witness it, she rushed into another room, where burying her head in her hands she strove to shut out the sounds of that beloved voice in its unmitigable suffering.

The old minister who had known him from a child, and had always respected though perhaps not loved him, went to him, and laying a kind, trembling hand on his shoulder, spoke words of soothing and consolation: "She would recover,—she would be well in time," for in the surprise and terror of the first moment, he had not caught the meaning of Mary's fainting words.

But he knew not the wound he had to heal, knew not the wrung conscience he had to calm; knew not, that instead of a simple, natural grief, there raged within that miserable soul an

unappeasable fire, a deafening, ringing cry of shame, and cruelty, and dishonour!

Oh! who can tell the sufferings of that hour, when one, not born for such things, found himself irretrievably plunged in their polluted depths!—when one who had perilled his salvation madly for an earthly good, found it torn from him, and his wrecked soul cast on the shoals of remorse and despair! O God! O God! such “wounded spirit who can bear?”

He could not answer the good old man, but his head sunk lower and lower in convulsive grief, while sighs—“sighs that exhaust but not relieve,” broke tumultuously from him.

These sounds of sorrow so near her, roused Mary again; and looking up, she became conscious of being in a strange place, and seemed to strive with inquiring eyes to make out who it was who stood by her with those white locks, and that kind compassionating look. Soon she remembered all that had happened; and then she knew who it was whose bowed head lay in such lowly misery by her side. All thought of self vanished, and her whole heart went out in grief for him—so stricken, so crushed! She clasped her gentle hands together, and large tears gathered beneath her closed lids as she breathed forth fervent prayers and implored in deep murmured accents, that peace and pardon and grace and comfort, might be given to him; and when her words died away for very weakness, her still clasped hands, and lips still moving silently, showed that still she sought for him gifts from above.

He did not raise his head—he could not; but how was his soul melted and wrung anew with remorse! Could she indeed be thinking only of him? Could she be returning the evil he had done her with prayer to God in his behalf? “Oh! not if she had known all,” he thought!—“not if she had known how he had sought to separate her from her promised husband when he had learnt to know how worthy that husband was of her!”

Yes! had she known all, her pity and her prayers would have been the same; for tender and forgiving are those who have “learned their lesson at the shrine of Love.” How full the pardoned heart of pardon! How full the beloved heart of love!

At length she turned her head towards him.

“Forgive me,” she said, in her low touching voice, “that even by silence I should have seemed to deceive; but I was so miserable, I knew not what to do—how to get help—to see my father.”

“Forgive you! *Me* forgive you!” he exclaimed. “Oh! do not mock me.”

And then there poured forth such torrents of self-reproach, of self-abhorrence, of hopeless repentance and regret, as froze her

almost to hear, and she implored him to refrain, to believe in her full forgiveness—her feeling sympathy—her offered friendship;—while all her gentle words but barbed with tenfold torture the arrows that had entered into his soul.

Her father, roused by hearing her voice, went to her. In an instant she had started up—her arms were round his neck, her kisses on his cheek.

“You are better now, my darling,” he said, eagerly, “and you will soon be well—and we can finish the ceremony here as well as —”

“Silence, for God’s sake!” exclaimed Captain Normanton, in a voice of thunder, and starting to his feet—his old imperious manner returning in an instant. And the terrified father shrank back to his seat.

“Miss Sydney,” then murmured again the wretched man, low and tremulously, and at long gasping intervals, as again he knelt beside her—“I leave you now—for ever.—But think not—should you hear I did not long survive—think not that it is anything you have done,—it is my own deed—my own sin. With more truth than I knew, I told you I had put my life in this thing But bitter as, at one time—insupportable—the thought of losing you was to me, it is not that—for that alone can I dare to thank my God. My own sin will have destroyed me; I yielded to it in every way—every way, till they told me you had consented. Then—the weight—the curse of it fell upon me! I felt death-stricken then, and nothing could have saved a life blasted by such remorse as mine. I leave you—I leave you—Miss Sydney. Pray for me,—think of me with pity—with forgiveness. Farewell—oh! farewell.”

His head was bowed down again for a time in silence,—the agony of parting seemed too great!—Then he rose hurriedly, and left the room.

The old clergyman followed him.

After a time he mastered his strong emotion, and held out his hand to his old friend, and commended Mary to his care that she might not be left alone with her father. Then, as if there had stolen a beauty into his character never there before, he hastily wrote a direction—though the effort seemed almost too great,—and put it into his hand, and implored him to write directly *there*,—to Mrs. St. Clair—and entreat her to come without delay. He begged him further to say, that he hoped—trusted they would stay at the Park House as long as they should like, and make use of Lorrington as their own. Then turning to his sister, he put his arms round her and pressed her silently to his heart. Her tears flowed in torrents as she hung about his neck but his own were spent, and only hollow sighs

came from the depth of his soul. He turned once more to his old friend, and grasping his hand, said :

"This is all strange to you ; but it will, I know, rest with you, and—in time—I will try and write."

Then bidding him farewell, he supported his trembling sister to the carriage which had been prepared for so different a purpose, and—a doomed and stricken man—left his own princely home, and set off for the coast before quitting England, it might be, he felt, for ever !

CHAPTER LXI.

Pray, in the hour of joy.—Thy purest bliss
Of life kneels down before the eternal Throne
In thankful tears ; praising with hand-clasp'd hands
The only Giver of good things.

TEGNER.

IMMEDIATELY on their landing at Portsmouth, Mr. St. Clair and his friend set off for Mrs. St. Clair's home at Hollington. It was early in the day, about the same hour that they had started together on the same journey some months before. Then, everything in nature was dead and cold ; their own hearts alone glowed with warmth. Now the matured summer was in the height of her leafy honours, and the earth and air were redolent of warmth and sweetness ; the coldness—the death lay in their hearts now.

The little vexations of their former journey, how trifling they appeared now that the weight of real grief oppressed their souls !

Mr. St. Clair's firm conviction that Mary's sorrows were at rest prevented his feeling the torture that otherwise he would have experienced ; yet still to his young heart the blight was terrible. There was peace within him, because he had resigned his treasure into the gracious hand of God ; but it was, at that trying moment, such a peace only as broods over a vanquished, desolated land ; and as the scenery of England brought back the memory of the happy hours they had passed together, amid unnumbered sweets at "morn and dewy eve," it needed indeed the strong consolations of a heart sensible of God's indwelling presence, to bear up under the desert prospect that lay between him and the grave. He was still weak, but he would not stop on the road, but determined if possible to go through in one day.

The weather was excessively hot, and the horses could not get over the ground so fast as they had done on their former jour-

ney, and it was therefore dusk evening, even of that long summer's day, when they reached their destination. They could not endure a formal announcement, so sending the chaise round, they walked to the drawing-room side, meaning to go in that way. Mr. St. Clair paused from uncontrollable emotion, when he stood again upon that lawn where he had knelt in such agony to Mary to implore her to consent to their secret marriage; and perhaps the greatest triumph that divine grace had yet achieved in his heart was at that moment—when, spite of all that had occurred to more than verify his worst fears—spite of all the unutterable sorrow he had himself to endure, he could yet thank God that his beloved had been so faithful in her holiness—so unyielding to all the strong temptation that *he* had placed before her. And though the harrowing result had torn his heart to agony, he could yet from his soul exclaim: "Even so, Father! for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

The window was open, and the light streamed from it throwing its brightness and its shadows on the grass as they passed. He could not look up. That night when they had been there together!—the happy breakfast the next day! Oh! memory crowded these things too thick and fast upon him!

But his companion, to whom no such remembrances belonged, looked up; when, with a cry that sent the blood curdling to Mr. St. Clair's heart, he grasped his arm and pointed to the window. Mr. St. Clair looked, and fell as dead at his feet.

The cry had brought the inmates in alarm to the open door; when seeing the figures of those on the lawn, they knew who they must be. In a few moments Mr. St. Clair was conveyed into the house; and when he opened his bewildered eyes, he saw his mother,—and Mary!

Who can conceive the burst of frenzied surprise,—of maddening doubt,—of overwhelming joy—that rushing of all feelings together, which in this poor world would fain be called happiness!

And then came the gushings forth of tearing tenderness,—the torrents of endearing words such as he had never thought to have breathed again,—which, through all their weakness and poverty, showed the unfathomable depths from whence they came—the question,—the answer,—the thrilling explanation,—the ever-new surprise! And then afresh the joy;—joy in each other—for each other!—oh!

Then again, came the sudden check,—the sudden pain,—the sudden terror, as, when the first flush of intense emotion had subsided,—each first saw how hollow and how pale was the other's check,—how weak the voice, how languid the whole being!

But they were together! and life would soon be bright again, and health flush back anew!

Yes! they were together—what worlds lay in those words! And when alone together, they knelt before their God, and praised His name.

Then came the old man, feeble, and penitent. And the mother! Ah! hers was joy! How had she trembled for her child's life—how mourned the needless sorrow he had had to endure! Needless! Oh, say it not of a God all love!

Well did he—that now joyful being—feel the blessing which those hours of dark, dark sorrow had been to him—into what light they had brought him. He knew now in whom he had trusted, knew Him to be the same, in storm and sunshine, in sunshine as in storm; and having given up all to Him in his unutterable sorrow, he could now trust Him with all his unutterable joy—sure that unless needed for his higher happiness, it would never be taken from him or dimmed again in life. He “dared rejoice in it, for he knew that it came not by chance, and neither by chance could it pass away.”

CHAPTER LXII.

I began to understand the necessity of that ruling one's own spirit, which is greater than taking a city.—ADAM GRAHME.

BUT who can analyze the feelings which warred together in Norman Bruce's heart that night of meeting? His astonishment was positive incredulity! And though at length he felt that the fact must be fact, and had heard all the explanations—yet still it appeared impossible. His mind had so completely received the conviction of that fatal marriage, that the reversal of all his ideas made him feel as if walking in a dream.

And let him not be scorned as ungenerous, if in that hour of transcendent happiness to others his spirit felt more desolate, more utterly wretched for itself than it had perhaps ever felt before. Indignation had at first mingled with his extreme unhappiness concerning Mary's fate,—then commiseration of him who was as desolate as himself; while his generous devotion of friendship had been a strong sustaining power. He had then had much to do, much to say—all had seemed to hang on him. He had been the comforter, the friend, the one sought. Now each sufficed the other—and he, he felt was not needed. In

vain the mother blessed him almost on her knees for what he had done for her son; in vain that son wrung his hand in gratitude that could find no words; in vain—worse than in vain,—did she he loved try to speak her thanks, and show him what she felt; he knew what she felt, and that was his misery. He turned away from them in moody wretchedness, and all that livelong summer's night, when

“The heavens were watching with their thousand eyes,”

he roamed about the fields and gardens in utter, repining desolation of heart.

But at length, when the beautiful dawn came up—the cold clear light of the sky growing each moment brighter and warmer in its hues, and the little fleecy clouds catching the blood-red rays of the sun, till the sun itself rose large and undimmed by a single vapour, his crimson blaze flashing back from the windows of the house where reposed so many happy beings, as if the visible blessing of God rested upon it—then did the heavy cloud, the bitter trial pass away from his spirit.

He had learnt many wholesome lessons in the time of that deep affliction to his friend; had seen how the power of God could work in the soul, and pour in strength and unearthly consolations when without them the spirit must have sunk under the greatness of its trial—had seen and watched all this with an humble and rebuked heart; and though at the first moment when he was the only sufferer, his spirit had sorely failed him again, yet now, under that double “day-spring from on high,” it revived. He took deep counsel with himself and with his God, and implored strength to overcome the selfish sorrow, natural but not noble, which had obscured his better feelings and made him cast a chill upon the joy which God had showered, after such bitter suffering, upon the hearts he so much loved. He returned to the house, and going to his own room, sat long there reading the page of inspiration shone upon by such clear light from above.

He looked anew into his heart to search out all its depths—all its weaknesses; and when his many faults flashed across his memory, and he saw how wrong, how self-deceived he had often been—how he had mistaken the indulgence of his own feelings for disinterested friendship, and the wrath of an untamed spirit for zeal for others' good, and his many sins and errors rushed over his mind—he covered his burning face with his hands, and prayed for strength, for light, for pardon—prayed that in all things he might be directed aright, and that he might be enabled to conquer a feeling which had led him so near the verge of sinful rebellion, and which, unblest alike in heaven and earth,

came as a chilling cloud between his soul and God—his heart and his dearest friends.

As he looked at his travel-soiled dress, he thought how like to it was his earth-stained mind; and when he threw it off, and, after the refreshment of the toilet, put on another,—he felt how complete an emblem it all was of the casting off of an old corrupt nature—the washing in the pure fountain opened for all sin, and the putting on of the offered robe of righteousness, prepared for him by that Holy Being, who will in no wise admit anything with spot or blemish into His high and royal presence.

He felt refreshed in body and mind; and stimulated by the high desire of overcoming himself and conquering all that could offend God in his heart, he went down to join the others at breakfast, and a feeling of cheerfulness entered his mind to which he had long been a stranger.

Mr. St. Clair looked at him with an astonishment which was soon changed to heartfelt thankfulness. He saw what it was, and knew that the blessing of God was there. It removed the weight of mountains from his breast; for the unhappiness of one so dear to him had been a heavy burthen. He felt that the turning point had come; and that each day now would see that ardent spirit recover more and more of its noble self-possession and of its buoyant cheerfulness. He could now endure to feel his own happiness, to rejoice in it fully; and, but that the thought of one miserable man far away would often cross and grieve his spirit, he might have felt his bliss almost too perfect for this world. The look of delicacy in Mary's appearance made him indeed feel anxious; but when he remembered his own haggard countenance and his own sense of weakness, yet felt what a difference only a few hours of Hollington and happiness had made in him, he hoped all things for her.

After breakfast, Mr. Bruce called him apart; and wishing him joy a thousand, thousand times, told him that he purposed leaving him that day.

"That day!" It seemed such a sudden parting. But Mr. St. Clair saw that it was best, so refrained from urging him to stay. A mutual grasp of the hand said everything.

"Where shall you go, Bruce?"

"I don't know; I've no fancy for London just now, nor for Scotland. Abroad, perhaps."

"Why not to the Marquis Villa Hermosa's? You said you would pay him a visit."

Mr. St. Clair's heart beat quick as he felt what was his motive for urging him to go there.

"So I will," replied Mr. Bruce, with animation; "that will

just suit me—time and all, for I must not go far away, out of respect to this promotion of mine which is never coming. That was a most happy thought of yours, St. Clair; for next to one—who from delicacy I shall not name just now—there is no friend I have on earth whose company I delight in as I do in Fernan di Villa Hermosa's."

"Then go, by all means; and say all and everything to them from me."

"And tell Donna Mercedes that 'you throw yourself at her feet again!'"

"Even so, and that I 'kiss her hand a thousand and a thousand times,' and will crave her leave to visit her again ere long, when I trust she may have forgiven me more fully than ever the offence which first made me bend the knee before her."

"Ah! that mysterious kneeling!" said Mr. Bruce, laughing. "But when are you likely to go there?" he added, as a shade of sadness again crossed his face, and he turned away,—“you will not, I suppose, go alone.”

"No," replied the other, his tone changing also in a moment to one of deep feeling; "and I only spoke at random."

"But when, St. Clair—when do you think you shall marry?"

"I don't know—but soon, I suppose. There can be no use in waiting now."

"None in the world," replied the other kindly, and with a manner totally different from his old taunting tone; "the sooner by far the better. You have both suffered enough, God knows! and General Sydney must wish to see her in your keeping before the time comes when he must resign his own guardianship, which, poor old man, cannot I should think be very far off."

"Oh, I don't know that, he is feeble but not ill; and his peaceful life now may, and I trust will, prolong his life for many years. I can't endure the thought of fresh sorrow for her."

"No! she's had enough for her young life already, and I pray that this may long be spared her. Still I should think the sooner everything is settled the better. And by the bye, St. Clair, I have something to tell you which may perhaps help to make all smooth for you." And he informed him of the happy discovery he had made respecting General Sydney's fortune.

"I did not tell you before," he added feelingly, "as I thought it might only add an additional pang to your suffering. But I don't think it is likely to grieve you now." And his old playful smile once more lighted up his changeful countenance.

"Bruce!" said Mr. St. Clair, some little time after, looking up at the other with the most beautiful expression of feeling,

"I want to say something to you—yet I scarcely know how to do it."

"What is it?" asked the other in surprise.

"When Mary was here before, you often sent her—money."

Flashes of fire shot from Mr. Bruce's eyes—his whole countenance was in a flame.

"Who told you so?" he demanded fiercely.

"She did."

"She never knew it—for certain at least."

"Women are not so dull as we are, Bruce; it is not easy to deceive them."

"And what if I did? I'd a right I suppose to spend my money as I liked? And there was no liberty in it—it came not from me, unless acknowledged."

"But it did come from you—so must, and shall be acknowledged."

"By ——." He checked himself,—but he flushed scarlet again with indignation as he added: "you're not paltry enough, St. Clair—because you are rich now—to think of returning it?"

"Returning it! Not for worlds! I wouldn't part with that blessed weight of gratitude for all the kingdoms of the earth—nor rob you, Bruce, of the joy of your gracious deed."

"There spoke a heart deserving of its blessed lot!" replied the other with sudden emotion,—pressing his powerful hand on the shoulder of his friend. "If you could have felt otherwise, St. Clair, you would have been a most unworthy husband of that heavenly being.—Yes!" he added sadly, after a pause, "it was a pleasure—a joy to minister to her comfort in any way. That poor channel alone was left for me, and you do well not to have grudged it me! St. Clair! we are about to part. Had you not been what you are,—had you not treated me with a feeling, a generosity, a noble trust, that few besides you could have done, I should have hated you—have cursed you from my inmost heart—have been driven an exile from friendship—from happiness—from God! But you have built up in me from your own noble nature, a trust I never had before in man—a faith I never had before in God. I have loved, as you know—madly, madly loved!—but it is past—I know not how, or why,—save by the mercy of my God—but I feel that it is past. She is to me now only your wife, and as such, most loved, most honoured! I shall feel, I dare say, lonely and empty for a time; but I have this night looked well into my heart, and God has graciously gone down with me into its deep, dark recesses. I have a great work to do I find—a subduing, a reforming work, and your prayers, St. Clair, my best, dearest friend! must not be wanting to me in it—nor

hers.—And now, may the blessing of the Almighty be increasingly with you! May His sheltering wing, His everlasting arms be over and beneath you.—After a time we shall meet I trust again, and often. But now—I go. Write to me, St. Clair—write to me.” And grasping his hand he turned quickly, and left the room.

He took leave of Mrs. St. Clair and of General Sydney—and then of Mary. He was troubled for an instant, but conquering himself, he looked at her with a clear and open smile. He took her hand in his, and kissed it with deep respect.

“You will think of me sometimes,” he said, “when you are St. Clair’s deserved and happy wife.”

And he was gone.

CHAPTER LXIII.

I thank God that you are safe, and at rest ; I thank God. My Father, my Father ! I thank Thee who rejectest no petition, that Thou hast heard my cry.—MERKLAND.

WHEN Mrs. St. Clair had received the letter from the old minister of Lorrington, she had set off without a moment’s delay for that place—first however sending off letters to try and stop Mr. Bruce from leaving England. But that was too late, he having, as we have seen, gone on board-ship almost immediately after arriving at Portsmouth. Her astonishment and gratitude were unbounded at the communication made to her ; but her thankful joy at finding that Mary had escaped the snares laid for her, was sorely mingled with apprehensions on her account, as the kind old man full of nervous fear himself and anxious to follow out Captain Normanton’s wishes, had written to her with such urgency not to delay her coming for a day even, that she dreaded in what state she might find her.

The meeting was most affecting between them ; and for a time it did really seem doubtful whether Mary would recover the effects of the cruel sufferings she had had to undergo. The sight of her beloved friend however, was in itself a cordial almost life-giving ; and the field of happiness which now again seemed to open before her—joined to the perfect peace and tranquillity in which her mind now reposed—offered every facility for her recovery. The having her father too, always near her—the lying with her hand in his—the looking at him, even though her weakness made it be in silence—all was joy, was balm to a spirit lately so tried by separation and sorrow. She was removed almost immediately to the Park House,

though the old minister continued constantly to visit her—gaining from her a deep insight into spiritual things, in return for the fatherly kindness and affection he bestowed so warmly upon her.

Nor least was her joy in having about her again her beloved Susan, whom Mrs. St. Clair had brought with her, though she would by no means dismiss from her the kind little maiden whose amiability and cheerfulness had been such a comfort to her before. The cherished passion-flower was restored to its own place again, and kept ever in her sight; and with a joy which those only can understand who know how remembrance clings and twines about such things, she saw fresh leaves and shoots springing from its broken stem and torn branches.

Weeks passed before she was able to leave her room, but they were weeks of quite indescribable happiness, so much did her mind enjoy its calm love-tended repose, and so easy and sweet was it to look but a little higher, and carry her happy thankful heart into the presence of her God. He, that kind Physician, kept all trouble and anxiety away from her as only He can—by filling her with peaceful thoughts, and rebuking the enemy that would have disturbed her.

One little incident touched her very much. Though Susan and Lucy were the only attendants who ever appeared in her room, yet she frequently heard another whispering voice at the door; and often a soft knock came, and some unexpected little delicacy was silently given in, or some fresh green food for her birds, or lovely flower for herself. When she had observed this several times, she asked whose were the kind but unseen ministrings which showed such constant thought and attention, and she was told they came from the old woman. She begged to see her; but it was long before she could be prevailed upon to come in. At length emboldened by Mary's kind messages, she at last took courage; but had hardly reached her bedside, before she fell on her knees, and earnestly besought her pardon.

Mary put out her hand in a moment, and the poor old woman covered it with tears and kisses.

"How could she ever forgive her? How could she bear the sight of her!"

Mary reassured her with the kindest words, and told her truly, that her one look of sympathy, and her kindness on that dreadful day had swept all else from her mind; and then she spoke to her sweet words of Him who loves to pardon, and whose mercy is greater than all our sins.

Once before she left the Park House she begged to be taken to Lorrington. With returning strength her remembrance of Captain Normanton recurred with increased pain; yet she had
giving once more to visit the place that belonged to him.

She went there with Mrs. St. Clair, and was deeply affected as she saw it in all its flush of summer beauty—blooming in vain, while its unhappy possessor roamed through foreign lands in wretchedness too great for words. Her tears streamed blindingly as she passed the violet bed—now a mass of dense leaves—where he had joined her first, and when she went into the conservatory where he had watched to send her the flowers she loved the best. She sat there long in silence, while her soul was lifted up in earnest prayer for him.

On her return to the Park House she wrote to him, thanking him for all his kindness; and speaking heart-melting words of friendship and regard, and of grief for all the sorrow she had caused him,—telling him how continually she prayed for him, and how sure she felt that in time the comfort and blessing of God would descend upon his heart.

The next day they left the place that had been the scene of so much suffering; and it was not long after, that Mr. St. Clair and his friend joined them at Hollington.

Peace and happiness did much towards restoring Mary's health; and in the course of a few months she was united to Mr. St. Clair, and felt

“The deep and heartfelt happiness,
Of a pure and hallowed love.”

The old house of happy memory near Dover being vacant, they went there, where they were soon joined by Mrs. St. Clair and General Sydney. The old man's health had received shocks which at his age he was not likely to recover, and gradually his strength gave way. But he was so peaceful and happy, that it was impossible to feel grief in looking at him—so mild, so tranquil, so full of kindness and affection, that it was a pleasure, though a sad one, to minister to the increasing dependence of his infirm age. All memory of the late painful events had quite gone from him, and his mind was thrown back to the time of Mary's first youth and girlhood,—save when at times a vague sense of her wrongs came over him and he would implore her pardon. He seemed accustomed to Mr. St. Clair and his mother without being able to account for their being with him, but it was a happiness to both of them to see how welcome their presence ever was; and Mary, through all her sorrow for him, was filled with rejoicing that those so dear to her should be a comfort to him who still possessed her heart's best love; while the faith, and peace, and penitence, that had been given in answer to her trustful prayers,

made her feel that the event which approached so gently yet so surely, could never separate them, but only free him from the infirmities of the failing flesh and clothe him with life and immortality. "Sown in weakness, raised in power: sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body!"

All was gently, peacefully over; and the frail tenement that once had held so vigorous a spirit quietly rested in the church-yard hard by. Mary's tears could not but flow; yet they were without bitterness, for she knew that it was only

"Of earthly air that he had breathed his last."

CHAPTER LXIV.

Wait awhile, O Death!

* * * O wait for those
Who have not tasted yet of Heaven's high grace;
Nor bring them to their audit, all unclothed
With a Redeemer's righteousness.

MRS. SIGOURNEY.

It was just a year since Mr. St. Clair's first night-visit to Hollington. Mary was returning in the evening from the grave which she had obtained permission to plant—according to the sweet custom of her mother's land—with flowers, and Mr. St. Clair, who had been detained at home, went to meet her. The pensiveness of her heart vanished at sight of him, and she brightly returned the smile that ever greeted her from that beloved countenance.

Well indeed had she judged his character when she gave him all her heart; and well did he repay with his infinite love, the noble truth and firmness which had preserved them to each other.

They strolled along the meadows by the side of the crystal stream, for the air was soft and mild; and the stars came "trooping out" in myriads as the twilight declined.

"You remember this time last year, almost this hour," he asked;—"that moonlight night when I returned from Vigo?"

"It is not one to be forgotten, Wilfred. What happiness we had!"

"Yes, and what unhappiness;—and I—what sin!"

"That is all gone, Wilfred, all washed away; but the happiness remains,—and the present happiness of past happiness is 'ways so delightful."

"Always? You do not agree then with your great poet:

'Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria.'"

(No greater grief
Than to remember happy times
In misery.)

"Oh no, the remembrance—the realized remembrance of happiness—must always be happiness; for the mind is present then with the happy past."

"Yes! I have found it so, even in my deepest trouble."

Mary was silent, for as the remembrance of past happiness to her was, as she said, happiness; so the remembrance of past trouble was trouble; and she could never endure to realize what her husband's feelings must have been during his dreadful trial. The sorrows of another spirit too—and that one still sorrowing—came across her with the reminiscences of that evening one short year ago—when he hung with such wretchedness over the gate of her little garden; and that was a chord that ever vibrated most painfully upon her heart.

The next morning they again talked of the "year before"—of that lovely soft November morning—of that rose that Wilfred had ever kept—of that happy breakfast! And as they looked at each other again, and the sun again shone in upon them, it seemed impossible that such storms of terrible sufferings could have shaken their souls since then.

"It will be a lesson to us at least," said Mrs. St. Clair, "not to despond too much if sorrow ever come again; for how completely can God sweep it away!"

"A letter for you Mary," said Mr. St. Clair, as the post came in a little while after. "I love so to see that direction!" And happy was the smile with which he put the letter into her hand.

"Lorrington!" she exclaimed, turning deadly pale as she observed the post-mark; "oh, Wilfred!"

Mr. St. Clair's colour rose, and a cloud crossed his brow; she did not see it, lost in her own fearful thoughts.

"Read it for me, Wilfred," she said; "I dare not open it."

"It can only be from one of the servants, for it is not from your old friend the clergyman," he replied, trying to speak calmly; "no one else is there."

"Oh no, it is not from them. I know the hand, though so much changed. Open it, dear Wilfred, I cannot."

"No, Mary, it may contain words not meant for my eye."

She looked at him in surprise.

"Have we then two beings?" she asked smiling, though sadly.

"No," he exclaimed, as he threw his arms agitatedly round her, "not for ourselves,—never for ourselves; but for others—yes. Remember, I have still one secret untold to you—my wife! and *he* may have things to say to you alone."

Mary felt that he might—words of penitence, of grief, of remorse! She opened the letter with trembling hands. He did not look at her,—would not read a feeling till she might wish to speak it—so beautiful!—so perfect was his confidence!

The letter was indeed from Captain Normanton. She read the sad lines that spoke of his intense sufferings with deep agitation, and laying her head on her husband's breast, wept there in silence for a time—feeling through all her sorrow for another, the untold blessedness of having that breast to weep upon. At length she murmured—half fearing to pain him by what she had to say:

"Wilfred! he craves so much to see me."

He started a little, as the colour flushed deeper than before.

"Oh, Wilfred," she added, as she pressed her cheek closer to his heart, "he is dying."

They were both silent for some minutes. At length he pressed her to his heart, and bending his face over hers, said:

"You will not fear to see him, Mary?"

"Oh yes, I should dread it," she replied.

"But you will not refuse?"

"No—not refuse, if you do not."

"Can you suppose I should?"

And yet it was not every one who could so perfectly have forgiven such wrongs as his—wrongs not only against himself, but against those most dear to him;—wrongs which, though they themselves had ceased, yet had left their bitter consequences behind:—the father's hastened grave, the child's deep grief!—and, though time, and love, and peace had done much with God's good blessing towards restoring health to that sorrowing child, yet there lingered about her still that frequent depression of spirits, that transparency of cheek, that sweet lowness of voice, that languid smile, which often sent a chill into her husband's heart, though he would not stop to own or analyze whence it came. These things, ever renewed before the mind, are not easily to be forgiven!

But he had "come within the ken of Heaven"—had weighed time against eternity, and knew how brief it was! He had felt that it was himself to be forgiven, and could he withhold from

another his "less forgiveness?" No! the spirit of Him who is "touched with the sense of our infirmities," dwelt too strongly within him for that, and had widely and blessedly opened in his heart

"The sacred source of sympathetic tears."

He had felt misery, and he could feel for it in others—had felt happiness, and could judge what it must be to live without it.

In a short time they were on their journey—most unthought-of journey—to Lorrington. How heavy were their hearts—heavy for the woes, for the faults of others! They were about to see—lying low in death-sickness and sorrow—the being who at that very time, but one short year ago, in the full flush of health and handsome manhood, was, in audacious disregard of their feelings, invading their privacy at Hollington and blasting their almost attained hopes of happiness. How clearly did they both recall his presence and his countenance that day! Yet they could feel for him—grieve for him, from the very depths of their hearts.

And well they might—for in the wide, wide world there probably existed not one creature so utterly wretched as he was—or could there have been found one, twin with him in misery, it was her, who was twin with him in birth.

They had borne about their broken hearts through scenes of nature's loveliest abroad; had rested—where rest seemed possible—in some favoured spot, then rushed on again to escape the avenging Deity within. But all in vain; and feeling at last that nature could endure no more, but that the frail body was fast sinking beneath the sufferings of the mind, Captain Normanton desired to be brought home, that he might die where his father had died—he who had been that proud father's joy and idol!—and resign his life where last he had breathed the breath of life with Mary.

When he reached Lorrington he was in the last stage of weakness; but a sort of satisfaction that came over his spirit at finding himself there again, seemed to arrest for a time the eager hand of death. He did not rally, but he did not sink so fast, and a ray of hope crept into his wretched sister's heart—that perhaps he might be spared. But he felt that it could not be so; and tried—vainly tried, to prepare himself for his great change. But he could not do it—could not find one hopeful thought of God. He strove to do it—but his mountain-sins rose between him and his offended Judge; he strove to do it, but he had yet to learn the force of that prayer: "Turn Thou

me, O God, and I shall be turned."—He knew not of the freedom and fulness of Christ's salvation, and sought to save himself—to atone for what he had done—to do something to make God favourable towards him.

But then he would remember Mary's prayers for him, and felt they could not be refused;—and then a hope, though vague and unformed would rise, and he would listen with soul intent, and eyes fixed in eagerness painful to behold on the old minister, as he spoke to him of truths which he himself had heard from Mary. But his soul dared not grasp them; he could not think they were for him, and so his heart sank down again the void and wretched thing it was before. Ah! who can tell, or bear to think how frightful was his misery!

He knew that Mary was married, and could at times thank God that his deeds had not done all the evil that they were calculated to do; and he longed that she should know that he was not so wholly lost as she might think, and to tell her that once he had meant to act rightly by her, but had been overcome again by his own evil heart—for he would not criminate his sister. He almost thought that if once more he could hear her say she pardoned him, that then he might dare to turn and ask his God to pardon, and this want grew so strong upon him at last that at times it brought on almost delirious feelings. Yet it was a thought too wild—to dare to ask her to see him again—to come to him. "Was it possible she should grant such a request?—possible her husband should let her grant it?" He told himself it was not—yet the intense wish grew ever stronger and stronger.

He had but lately received her letter. The old minister to whom it had been sent for him, knew not at the time—no one knew—where he was; and when, after his unexpected return to Lorrington he had mentioned it to Lady Davenport, she had besought him not to deliver it—not wholly from intentional unkindness to Mary—though from her inmost soul she hated her—but because she feared the effect it might have upon her brother. But at length, when he saw how the distempered soul of his poor friend craved for her pardon, he could withhold it no longer. He gave it him; and what a revulsion of feeling did it produce! It was truly for a time almost like her living voice speaking to him of forgiveness. It produced a trembling joy, a breathing hope, he had never felt before.

"Could Mary pity him! would not then his Creator? Could Mary forgive him! would not then his Redeemer? Could Mary pray for him! and would not the Holy Spirit intercede?—oh!" he might have added indeed, "'with groanings which cannot be uttered?'" He dared for a moment to look upward, to lift his

wasted hands and wounded heart to God. How had those kind forgiving words sunk into his soul! And when she spoke of the peace and comfort that were to be his, he felt almost already as possessed of them.

Yet soon this first impression faded away, and fear again depressed him; and then returned that dreadful craving—once more to hear her say she pardoned him. "His days were so well nigh spent, his life so near its close, surely she would not refuse,—surely her husband even would not deny his request, when he knew how he had suffered!"

Ah! did he reckon on the nobleness of him he had so injured? The blood rushed over his death-like countenance as the thought flashed across him.

But he could endure it no longer; he had ascertained where she lived, knew she was again in the house where first he had seen her in England, and though shudderings seized him as he wrote it, he there directed to her that letter which had so touched and troubled her—in almost illegible characters pouring forth his penitence, his misery, his agonized entreaties, that she would let him once again hear her pronounce his pardon.

There was perhaps the weakness of remaining affection that mingled itself with this earnest craving; but it was unknown, unacknowledged by him. The thoughts of his former feelings were now his agony—mixed as they were with the burning sense of shame, and grief, and sin—and never did he willingly permit his memory to recall them; mourning, with late remorse, the having poured upon a mortal that deep tide of feeling which could belong of right to God alone.

CHAPTER LXV.

The struggling hope, by shame, by doubt repell'd,
 The agony of prayer, the bursting tears—
 The dark remembrance of guilty years,
 Crowding upon the spirit in their might.

MRS. HEMANS.

It was towards evening of the second day that Mr. St. Clair and Mary arrived at Lorrington. The clouds and mists that had hung heavily about all the morning were beginning to break away, and here and there the white light shone down in silvery softness, giving brightness without colour to the landscape. Yet Lorrington looked beautiful—the water so tranquil, and the grass pearled all over with dew ; while the mists still nestling in among the woods, shrouded the topmost trees with their gauzy mantle, and distilled in soft drops from leaf to leaf.

They sat silent as they drove through the princely park, their hearts filled with sad thoughts of him so near them—dying, and in such unhappiness. What now to him—bound down to the bed of death—were all his vast domains ? what—the glorious beauty spread upon the earth, when in his own heart there lay such mines of deep, inexorable misery ?

Lady Davenport was at the window of her brother's room—watching with vacant look the lights and shades that moved with so ghostlike a solemnity over the magnificent expanse before her—when the carriage caught her eye.

“How strange !” she exclaimed.

“What ?” asked her brother feebly.

“A travelling-carriage, driving up towards the house. Who can it be ?”

“Impossible !” exclaimed Captain Normanton, starting up, but instantly sinking back again. “Can she have come ?—so soon ?” And he covered his face with his hands, as his whole frame shook with emotion.

“Can *she* have come ? *Who* have come ?” demanded Lady Davenport in a voice of thunder. Needless question ! she felt who it was.

It was some moments before Captain Normanton could answer. He then in a deprecating, feeling tone—for he knew how much it would cost her ever to see Mary again—began :—

“Augusta, my dear Augusta, come to me, and——”

"Not till you tell me *who* is in that carriage," she replied fiercely—her eyes flashing fire even on her dying brother.

"I would have told you before, my dearest sister, and not have let it come on you so by surprise—but I had no idea she would have come so soon—scarcely dared hope indeed,—but that I knew her nature—that she would have come at all—to me."

"I am, I suppose, to be left then to infer who this person so much desired is," she replied, swelling with indignation; "but if you fancy, Sigismund, that I am going to receive, or even for one moment offend my sight with the presence of Mrs. St. Clair, you are mistaken."

He shivered as she pronounced that name, for never before had she done so; but her rage at that moment overcame all other considerations.

He felt her doing it deeply; but after a moment he told himself it was love to him that had so moved her.

"My dearest sister," he said, with a gentleness that almost subdued her, "I will not ask of you anything that can give you pain. Augusta,—come to me."

She left the window—reluctantly at first; but as she drew nearer to him she felt the strong force of attraction, and throwing herself on his neck she covered his pale face with her fervent, repentant kisses. He put his arm round her, whispering in faltering accents:

"Oh Augusta, I have longed, with what intensity you cannot know, to hear her once again say she pardons me. I have felt I could not live,—could not die without it. I had meant to tell you. Forgive me, dearest.—But now—I hear her carriage! Oh God! oh God!" And he raised his eyes and hands in silent agitated supplication, as his sister went and requested Mr. Aubrey, the old minister, to go down and receive "her brother's friends."

He went down;¹ and after a time a message from Captain Normanton brought him and Mary up to his room. He was too feeble to be moved on to a sofa or even to be supported up in his bed, but lay there, presenting the affecting spectacle of manhood brought down to the weakness of a child. A shaded lamp was all that lit that sad apartment, and it was with trembling steps and a shrinking heart that Mary entered it. The old man led her to the side of the bed, and silently placing her in a chair, retired to the further end of the room.

What a picture would that apartment have made just then! That old man with the lamp's bright light streaming on his

benign but sorrowful countenance and silvery hair, and that dying couch in the dim shade, with that beautiful girl beside it a solemn picture, full of melancholy beauty—but whose outward sadness was but a faint type of the sorrow and suffering that was going on within.

The silence was not broken for a time, save by Captain Normanton's labouring sighs and Mary's restrained sobs. She dared not raise her eyes to his face—dared not meet the look of death she felt was resting there. He dared not either look at her. "Oh! that he had never seen her!" After a time he spoke.

"Miss Sydney," he murmured;—then stopped with a painful start, remembering that that name was hers no longer.

"Call me so," she said feelingly; "call me so always."

The sound of her voice in a moment unlocked all the recesses of his nature. Tears—strange visitants—rushed to his eyes; and feelings, emotions of all kinds, struggled up from their unforgotten depths and strove for utterance. All his deep repentance, his broken-hearted grief, his self-abhorrence, his sense of sin, of dishonour, shame, his terrible despair, his "fearful looking for of judgment to come,"—all rushed tumultuously from his riven heart with a force that a few moments before had seemed impossible.

Once had he spoken somewhat of them before; but what were his words—his feelings then, to those which were now shone on by the lurid torch of death, the glare of a lost eternity? They had been then but the first awakenings of his heart from the trance of sin; now they had been thought over and over "almost to madness"—each wearing its own deep channel in his soul, till that wretched soul had been torn and distracted beyond endurance. "Sin leaves dreadful legacies!"

Mary shuddered as she heard him, but could not stop him—she felt it would be a relief to him to pour forth all his heart; and then she spoke of peace and comfort. But every word of hers seemed, by its very gentleness and kindness, to awaken new horrors in his breast; and still he seemed to have something unspoken which yet he could not speak.

"I must say all," at length he exclaimed, with a frightful effort—"must lay all my sin before you, that you may know what I have been, and how mercy can never reach such crimes as mine."

And then he told her how he had at last known St. Clair to be noble, true—while he was the vilest wretch that crawled the earth! "But," he continued in smothered accents, "I could not give you up,—all the evils of my nature rose up to hinder

me. Oh, that dreadful hour—when they told me you would be mine !”

Mary sat horrified. She was too young, too good to imagine to what extremes Satan can compel the soul that has yielded itself to his power—too inexperienced to know how, while they loathe the sin, prayerless men can yet be driven on to its committal. A new and dreadful world seemed opened before her, and she sat there silent, trembling, affrighted.

He felt that breathing silence—felt in it the condemnation of his soul. “Yes, he had sinned beyond even her forgiveness—beyond even her power to speak to him of peace !” In lost affright he shrieked aloud. His large wild eyes seemed starting from their sockets, and drops of horror streamed from his brow.

She could not endure the sight ; she fell upon her knees beside him, and strove to break the spell of that dreadful oppression. The old minister drew near alarmed by his cries, and wiped the death-dews from his brow, and bathed with water those stern lips now quivering in mortal anguish. Mary spoke to him in words of kindness.

She murmured prayers for him, and spoke to him of the God whose compassions fail not, and who is ready abundantly to pardon.

“But you ?” he said ; “I dare not ask God, till you have forgiven me.”

“Oh, can you doubt I do ?” she replied with a look that carried conviction to his soul.

He closed his eyes. . . . “Now then pray for me,” he murmured.

His lips moved for a while, as if following her prayers, but then they ceased ; and his low, regular breathings showed that he slept the calm and deathly sleep of nature’s sad exhaustion.

Mary rose, and taking the old man’s arm, she pressed it with deep affection, as they stood together for a time gazing on that worn, pale countenance. Suffering “had written strange features on his face,” and yet it was still the same. That finely-shaped but gloomy brow still wore its imperious look, and the straight compressed lips still spoke the stern resolve.

There had been indeed little to soften in the influences that had surrounded him—nothing in truth but the sole memory of Mary’s words. When they had sounded in his spirit, unmingled with the thought of his own conduct towards her, they had been soothing indeed ; but the waters of his soul were seldom peaceful enough for her pure image, with all its refining powers, to rest on them long undisturbed. His deep remorse, his agony

at the remembrance of her sufferings would sweep over them, and make her broken image terrific to his soul.

In his sister he had found no comfort ; she had no heavenly consolations to impart, and her feelings of hatred towards Mary made it insupportable to him ever to hear her mention her.

His thoughts too of God were so terrible ; for severe to himself as to others, he had struggled against all softening hope, and told himself it was impious to think that God could pardon sin like his. Retribution, his stern nature seemed to demand, even on himself ; and thus all his suffering, instead of forming a blessed "affiliating bond between his soul and its God," alienated it from every refreshing thought of Him. The words, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord," seemed the only ones of Scripture which could obtain any hold over him ; and ceaselessly did they vibrate through his whole soul.

Of late indeed, a more softened tone of feeling had at times come over him ; and though he dared not hope, yet the hard, hard thought of a God waiting for vengeance presented itself less often less terribly to him. And then it was that the fevered thought arose, that "if Mary would pardon, God perhaps might pardon also."

In deep ignorance was this thought framed ; for how can the breath of a mere mortal affect the decisions of the Almighty ?—how can anything but the, "Father forgive," of Him who was God as well as man—of Him whose love-drawn blood has disarmed Divine Justice and let "Mercy" have her perfect work—bring down pardon on the soul ?

And yet God does often reach us by a human arm, and make earthly love the channel by which He pours into the soul His love divine—and Mary prayed that it might be so now. And as she saw a softer expression come over that sleeping sorrowful face, she seemed to feel that her prayers would be granted.

"Why should they not ?" she would have said with her simple faith ; "He willeth not that any should perish !"

CHAPTER LXVI.

I thought to meet no more, so dreary seem'd
Death's interposing veil, and thou so pure ;—
Thy place in Paradise
Beyond where I could soar.

Well might Camoens wonder, that in so small a theatre as that poor bed, it should please fortune to represent such great calamities.

It had been arranged that the St. Clairs should stay at the Park House ; and thither they repaired after Mary's agitating interview with Captain Normanton.

With what a tender melancholy—though mingled with such grateful feeling—did she once more enter the house where her sufferings had been so great. How did the image of her father rise up in every part, and seem everywhere to meet her ! All painful remembrance of his harshness was swept away ; she could only think of him as the anxious being who had watched over her in her sickness, and restlessly, in his great love, moved around her day and night. He was not himself she felt, when he so sorely persecuted her ; and even had he been, she who had never felt anger during his lifetime, how could she remember it now that he was gone ?

Death is merciful to us in that ; and if he plant a dagger in the soul, he often extracts a thousand barbed thorns that may have been rankling there before. Beautiful that well-known saying : "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*" (Of the dead speak nothing but good.)

And of him too, now all but numbered with the dead, how sadly did she think ! Seated on the same chair on which she had sunk down after her terrible interview with him in the garden, how vividly did that scene rise up before her in contrast to what now was. His haughty violence changed now for lowly penitence ; his cruel threats, for gentle seekings of her pardon. Ah, if she mourned the sudden cutting down of his manhood, if she wept to see his strength and vigour gone like the flower of the grass when the wind passeth over it, she could yet feel that through all his misery, through all his weakness, he was a

happier being now than when, in the height of his influence and power, he had used the one to persecute, the other to crush her.

She went over the house, and shuddered as she looked at the window through which she had made her escape, and thought of her fearful fall. But of that she said nothing to Wilfred ; she could not harrow his feelings by telling him of all she had suffered, even though it had been for him. She looked for the tree that had saved her life, but it was gone. It had done its work and was removed.

The same two servants were there—Captain Normanton had interceded that they might not be dismissed—and they rejoiced to see her again. And as they saw her husband, and looked on his fine countenance, now saddened by compassion for him who had wrought him, they knew, such grievous wrong, they could not but feel how great had been the sacrifice their young mistress had been called upon to make.

In the course of the evening Mr. Aubrey came to them. He said that on awakening, Captain Normanton had been more calm and tranquil than he had seen him before since his sad return home, though he was evidently fast sinking. He had charged him to try and express his deep gratitude to Mrs. St. Clair for her generous kindness, and to implore, if it were not asking too much, that he might be allowed to see her once again before he died.

The next day accordingly they took their sorrowful way to his house, by the old pathway, trodden so often with such different feelings by Mary. They were received by Mr. Aubrey, who accompanied her up to the chamber where death was fast achieving his ghastly victory.

"This is most kind," said the dying man, as he held out his pallid hand to her.

"You are better to-day?" she asked.

"Nearer the close." He looked at her for some time in silence.

"Are you well?" he said at length.

"Much better," she replied.

"But are you well?" he continued in a voice of much alarm.

"Tell me—tell me."

"I shall be so in time," she answered with a kind smile.

"God!" he exclaimed, shudderingly.

"Do not fear for me," she said gently; "but tell me of yourself—that you have found peace of heart."

"Oh! I have sought it—oh, I have sought it! But can the same fate be for you—and me?—you so holy, I so vile!"

"The same fate is for all who sorrow for their sins, and believe on Him who has washed them all away," she replied. "God's Heaven is open for all who call at its blessed gate for Christ's sake. 'None' who so call, it is written, 'shall in any wise be cast out.'"

"Can it be? Such a life as I have lived! oh, can it be? And yet I have so agonized to be reconciled to God! My sins have been so terrible to me!—And yet, if you can pardon—you, who though as an angel in comparison of me, are yet a fallible mortal in God's sight—if you can pardon, will not He—not when I implore Him—implore Him—for Christ's sake?"

"Doubtless He will—doubtless He has!" she exclaimed, as she clasped her hands with solemn fervour and sank on her knees at his side. He laid his feeble hand on her head as it was bowed before him, and blessed her from the bottom of his soul for all she had ever been to him;—blessed her, and hers. The old minister drew near, and knelt beside them, and lifted up his voice in fervent prayer. After a time he rose, but Mary still continued kneeling; her heart was so melted within her that she could not cease from prayer.

At length she looked up. There was a beauty in her face indescribable, yet such as brought a shudder anew over Captain Normanton, and even the old minister seemed struck by it.

"You are not well," he whispered.

"Oh yes," she replied; "but I had been quite away from earth for a while, and it seemed almost strange to return to it."

The old man said no more—he was fearful of alarming her, and of adding fresh pangs of remorse to the crushed spirit of his repentant friend; but he watched her with, as it were, suspicious looks, as she still knelt there with that holy look in her large expressive eyes; and when the faint colour mantled again slowly in her transparent cheek, he turned away, for painful thoughts oppressed his heart.

At length Captain Normanton with nervous agitation and evident difficulty murmured to Mary: "Do you think it possible—would St. Clair bear to see me? I desire so greatly his pardon."

"I am sure he would," she replied eagerly. And she went down to make the request; and they returned together to the sad chamber of death.

Captain Normanton closed his eyes—he shrank from meeting

that injured countenance. Mr. St. Clair took his emaciated hand as it lay on the coverlid, and clasped it kindly. He returned the pressure; but for some minutes neither of them spoke. It was such a meeting as could seldom take place even in this world of strange trials. At length, but still without looking at him, Captain Normanton said, "You are most generous—most kind to come to me, St. Clair—to let her come; but you were ever generous."

"Oh no," exclaimed Mr. St. Clair; "I have had a thousand, thousand faults towards you; and you must tell me you forgive me."

"It is mockery to speak so," said Captain Normanton; "I have, as you deeply know, to implore of you a forgiveness few would grant."

He had known that Mr. St. Clair had heard the report of his marriage, and that it had brought him to the verge of the grave. When therefore, he had said this, and at last dared to raise his eyes, and saw in that still pale and altered countenance the deep traces of the sufferings he had endured, he felt indeed that few there were who could forgive such wrong.

"All has been forgiven long, long ago," said Mr. St. Clair. "Fervently did I pray for you, Captain Normanton, when my own affliction made me feel for what I thought was yours; and now I beseech you to believe, I have no feeling but that of deep sorrow—deep sympathy."

"You are most noble," said Captain Normanton. "Oh! it is dreadful to look back!"

"All is effaced—all washed out, for those who take their bleeding hearts to Christ," said Mr. St. Clair. "We have all offended Him far more deeply than—than any of us can offend another—He who suffered for us—died for us—loved us!"

"Ah that is sin!" he murmured, agitatedly. "Love so refused—so slighted! To remember how He has shaken my heart—called—and I would not listen. Oh God! who could have mercy like Thee?"

"Then like a long-forgotten strain
Came sweeping o'er his heart forlorn,
What sunshine hours had taught in vain,
Of Jesus suffering shame and scorn;"

and he covered his face with his hands and shuddered.

After a time he withdrew them, when a great change had evidently taken place. A mortal paleness had overspread his countenance, and his breath came with difficulty. He turned

his eyes on Mr. St. Clair with that look of frightful wildness which a sense of suffocation gives.

"What can I do for you?" said the latter, in great alarm, as he bent over him.

"Raise me," he gasped.

He put his arm beneath his head, and he became more tranquil.

Mary had been watching them, as she stood near the bed—her dearest husband, and him in whom she felt so great an interest—the interest, the love which that blest bond, forgiveness, gives. Is it not that which binds our God to us with such an unchanging love? She saw with terror that the last moment approached; she turned to call Mr. Aubrey.

"Let her stay—if she can bear it," faltered Captain Normanton.

Mr. St. Clair made a sign for her to return with Mr. Aubrey, which she did.

"Augusta"—then gasped the dying man, when he saw his friend approach.

She came in, distracted, her eyes wildly fixed upon him—she seemed to see nothing else, no one else there. She rushed to him, and buried her face in the pillows at his side.

"Augusta! dearest love!" he murmured; and he fondly clasped the arm that was thrown in such agony across his breast. He held out his hand to Mr. St. Clair, then to Mary. There was a deep silence in the room—a feeling pause, solemn, affecting! Scarcely an agitated breath was heard. At length Mary felt her hand more strongly grasped, and a smile passed into those dark, unearthly eyes, as if gratefully blessing her.

"Mercy—pardon—Christ—" he murmured.

Suddenly a spasm of pain shot through his breast. And then, as he felt the death-strife begin, the first, fond, fast-rooted affection of his heart overbore all else. He quitted Mary's hand, and threw his arms passionately round his sister.

That poor, poor sister! She threw herself upon his neck, and with heart-rending cries, told him, "He must not—could not—should not leave her." He gasped out tenderest words of peace, of love, of faith; till—at last—fainter and fainter—the sounds died upon his lips, and his spirit had passed away.

She knew it not; the agony of her own cries made her unconscious how silent now were those pallid lips—the throbbings of her own heart—how still the breast on which she lay.

The old minister, himself overcome with grief, put his arm kindly round Mary, and withdrew her from the harrowing scene. Mr. St. Clair could not stir; his arm was still beneath

the poor unconscious head, and he could not make known her loss to that unhappy sister. There he leant, upon that bed of death, alone with those two. Strange! that he should be there;—that it should be his hand to close those dying eyes—his voice first to speak of comfort to that wretched mourner!

In a little while she had missed the fond breathing of that loving heart, and in sudden terror she stopped, and listened. No sound, no breath, no motion!—"It could not be, she would not have it so!" She called to him and commanded him to speak, with all her old determined will. Then drawing back she looked into his face. The shriek she gave rang through Wilfred's brain for days and days!

She dashed herself upon the corpse; she tore the hair in handfuls from her head; she screamed in wild distraction! Then putting around her neck again those helpless, unresisting arms, she bid him press her once more to his heart, and not "leave her cruelly alone—alone—alone."

The despair of her grief, the tenderness of her appeals to him whom she had loved with such a perfect love, completely overcame Mr. St. Clair, and his emotion became almost as irrepressible as her own. She heard his voice, and looking up, saw that pale young face bending over the dead, and bathing that solemn brow with tears. She gazed with blank astonishment.

But soon the truth flashed over her—she felt who it must be. She buried her face in her hands, and threw her head down again beside the dead; but now she wept with less passion, less bitterness. Those tears of his—that sympathy—had fallen like balm on her heart; and when, amid her own grief, she remembered from whom they came—from him, the wronged, the injured—her very soul shrank within her, confounded—melted—overpowered!

Oh, godlike kindness! what power thou hast! How near to Heaven would even this parting earth be, if all could feel—all could show it!

"He is happy now, Lady Davenport," he whispered, in a tone of deep emotion; and he closed those wearied eyes which had opened he trusted, on brighter scenes.

"Oh! but he must not leave me"—she exclaimed, distractedly; "I cannot, cannot part from him!"

Then raising herself, she gazed again on that dear face that had been all life to her, still tender with its parting feelings; and with a gentle sorrow more touching even than her passionate grief, she spoke to the dead, gently, soothingly,—as to a sick and restless child. Her mind seemed to wander, and she
of other times—and how they had been as children

together, and had known no happiness apart; and that he must not grieve, nor sorrow any more, but stay with her, and all would be well. And she smoothed the dark and waving hair, and pressed her cheek to the cold cheek, and whispered words of love

It was more than Mr. St. Clair could endure, he felt his own brain turning—for the grief of others was always his; and he felt also steal over him again that dark and shadowy fear which, vague and shapeless as it was, yet coming at that moment, crept like an ice-stream through his heart and made the drops of terror stand upon his brow. He gently withdrew his arm from beneath the heavy-resting head, and unobserved by poor Lady Davenport, who was lost in her touching communings with the dead, he left the room, and going down stairs, begged Mr. Aubrey to go and try and comfort her; and throwing his arms round Mary, he held her long in silence to his heart, too troubled, too confused to speak, save in long-drawn sighs.

CHAPTER LXVII.

All the earth
Hath not another voice to reach my soul,
Now "his" is silent.

MRS. HEMANS.

THE St. Clairs remained at the Park House till after the funeral had been performed. Mr. St. Clair had made it his request to be allowed to pay the last token of his respect to the departed, and Lady Davenport had gratefully accepted the offer. She was of course aware that the outline at least of the affair with Mary—varied of course into a thousand oblique shapes—was known in the neighbourhood, and had therefore shrunk from accepting any of the many similar offers that had been made by others, stating her wish that the funeral should be as private as possible. But, strange as it may seem, the thought of Mr. St. Clair's attending it was grateful to her heart. She had felt much touched by his kindness; and she thought too—with her ever-watchful attention to the interests of the departed—that his being there might in some measure tend to disprove, or at least soften, the reports that were in circulation.

She had been in the most lamentable state of mind ever since the fatal event; sometimes quite distracted, at others sitting

in moody silence for hours together. Food had scarcely passed her lips ; nor had she once closed her eyes in sleep, since those beloved ones had closed in death. She had never read, never prayed, nor ever spoken of *him* to any one ; her spirit had never been communicative, save to one, and now that ear was dull, that heart was cold !

Oh ! the weight of unsanctified sorrow ! that sorest, most afflictive sight in all this sorrowing world !

She had scarcely for a moment left the dear remains. Her hand had wrapped the shroud around them, her hand had laid that beloved head in its last resting-place. Sore retribution ! for it was her hand which had wrapped his soul in the shroud of selfishness—which had laid his honour in the dust.

Not hers the grief that could deck that solemn couch with flowers ; there was no hope-wreath mingled with the cypress in her mind, all was gloomy, black, and harsh,—as she considered the heavy stroke to be, that had cut her life as it were, in two—robbing her of all the sunshine, and leaving only the cold drear shadow of despair and woe.

And well did the stern and rigid though finely-cut lineaments of him who lay so silent there, suit with the sable trappings around—the noble stature and fine form bearing witness, in their utter powerlessness, how weak is the strength of man and his life as a thing of nought, when once the death-blast has gone forth against him.

And here let us pause a moment—it is well worth it—to trace the mercies of God in His dealings with this proud and penitent man ;—to observe how, against his obduracy and neglect, He had raised up His own purposes of love and goodness.

Had he attached himself to one who, though she might have been as gentle and lovely as Mary, yet had been without her godly feelings, he might have had all the heart's sorrow without the soul's benefit. And though at the moment, it were impossible not to have mourned the overthrow of the better feelings and resolves that had once possessed him, yet that very overthrow it was which had led him to the foot of the cross in humble, broken-hearted contrition. The besetting, the ruling sin of his nature had been pride—pride of character, of heart, of feeling. Though in the great sacrifice he had once contemplated, a sudden tenderness towards Mary had mingled its silver stream with the more turbid waters of his soul, yet pride had had a mighty part in it. “He would win their esteem, their gratitude ;—he would show Mr. Bruce that another besides himself could love nobly

though in vain!" And had he been permitted to carry out that "splendid sin"—that act of generosity in which God had had no part, the canker-evil of his nature—his self-esteem, would have been exalted above measure, and his self-poised character have stood in more awful independence of his God than ever. Therefore he was allowed to fall—allowed to fall that he might not be cast down for ever;—allowed to do that which degraded him in his own eyes, that he might learn to seek the honour that cometh from God alone;—allowed to manifest his sin before man, that he might learn to see and repent it before God. "That stumble against the stone *had* saved him from the precipice;" and "where sin had abounded, grace did much more abound."

Ah! cannot we feel what a motive this is not to sin? Who would offend a love that had already forgiven—a love which "never willingly afflicts," but only that we may be made holier thereby? God lets not suffering fall on His children as the punishment of past, but only as the preventative of future sin; and the earlier we humble ourselves under His mighty hand—the earlier we conform ourselves to His Divine nature, the sooner will He be enabled to gratify His own exceeding love by lifting off from us the pressure of that trouble and affliction, in each stroke of which He has, with such infinite tenderness, sympathized with us.

The only signs of softened feeling that Lady Davenport had shown were when any word or message had come from Mr. St. Clair; then she had roused herself, and sent some kindly answer. That the thought of him should be continually blended with that of her brother was most natural—indeed inevitable; but that that blending of their images should partake of anything like pleasurable emotion seemed most strange. Yet the power of sympathy had effected that. She felt intuitively Mr. St. Clair's truth, and of his nobleness and feeling she could not doubt; and never having opened herself to the kindly ties of real friendship but in one instance,—true, freely-expressed sympathy bore a strange charm to her, and unknowingly she yielded to its power. True, she had injured him; but up to the very time of that fearful marriage ceremony, she had really thought him unworthy. It was for his sake too (she thought entirely), that Mary had rejected her brother; but still it was Mary who had rejected him—Mary who had overthrown her designs and baffled her arts—and against her therefore her indignation remained unmitigated, while towards Mr. St. Clair her feelings were so much softened.

She insisted on attending the funeral herself—she would not lose sight of what contained the precious remains till they must of necessity be shut from her for ever; and it was Mr. St. Clair's arm—strange!—that sustained her during the terrible trial. When it was over, she returned to Lorrington to make her last dispositions for leaving that loved spot for ever. The estate went to a distant cousin; but had it been her own, she would never have been able to have lived there—never have endured to go again about a place so full of his loved idea, of his image from child to man—fraught too with remembrances of such humiliation, such grief! She had not once borne to look on it since he died—had never allowed the shutters to be opened, but had had them kept entirely closed that she might not see even one glimpse of the surrounding beauties—and at last she chose the darkness of night for setting forth alone, a wretched, wretched wanderer, over a desert earth.

She sent Mr. St. Clair a valuable remembrance of him whose faults had brought on himself so terrible a doom and whose repentance had been so sore—the bitterness indeed of a broken spirit and broken heart!—and accompanied it with a letter in which she spoke her own grateful feelings. But she breathed no word of wrong done, or repentance felt. This could scarcely perhaps have been expected; and it is only matter of wonder that her feelings had softened to the degree they had towards him. Frequently afterwards did she send him kind remembrances and letters, but it was long before Mary's name was ever mentioned in them. It was so after a time however, and he hoped it was a sign that better feelings had been awakened, and that her bitter sufferings had not been wholly unblessed to her.

Mary had seen the sad remains borne in through the church-yard gate where *he* had assisted her from the carriage, and down the path where he had followed her with so crushed a spirit, and had heard, when the party of mourners had entered the church, the shutting again of that solemn door whose hollow sound had rung so drearily in their hearts before; and though her tears would fall from tender kindness to him who was gone, and from feeling sympathy for her who was left behind, yet she could not but feel how far happier now was his state than when he had been so sorely outraging his better nature to follow his wayward will;—how infinitely brighter and happier than even the fate he had so coveted on earth, the calm forgiven peace which she felt he had, through infinite mercy, now obtained. As she stood sadly looking forth, her mind unconsciously went

back through all the scenes they had passed together : their first acquaintance, their voyage home, and their earliest intercourse in England,—when the almost unaccountable fear she had felt of him seemed to shadow forth the sufferings he would afterwards occasion her. And then—oh! the last few days!—those interviews—those touching, painful, hopeful interviews!—And all was viewed through the medium of that sad reverence which ever attends the memory of the dead, and of that softening tenderness which so often hangs around the thought of those who have loved us with

“ Unrequited love and true.”

CHAPTER LXVIII.

She is like that harp the winds do play upon. Mark her well ; she shall tell you what she dreams unwittingly, for her face is no mask—nothing but a veil ; and under it you shall see her heart beat.—*Old Play.*

MARY and her husband returned to Mrs. St. Clair.

Time sped on ; but winter did not tend to increase Mary's strength, and her health, though not actually bad, was yet not satisfactory. She sighed for her native air, and it was hoped that that might quite restore her ; so before the biting March winds set in, they made their dispositions for quitting England for a time, for the warmer, balmier air of Nice. But as the spring winds even there were often very trying, and as they had received continual, pressing invitations from the Marquis Villa Hermosa to visit him in Spain, they determined to do so on their way out.

To their surprise they found Mr. Bruce still there. The last time they had heard from him he had talked of going away, and they had fancied him far off, though they knew not where.

The meeting between the two parties was, for obvious reasons, one of great and curious interest ; but a very few minutes sufficed to show Mr. St. Clair what he most desired to know—that Donna Mercedes was not changed, and that Norman Bruce was.

She was evidently very nervous at first ; but it was delightful after a while to see her with Mary—to see those two beauteous creatures sitting together, looking at each other—with warm

pleasure on Mary's side, and with intense interest on Donna Mercedes', who could not but sigh when she saw how lovely she was, and felt how impossible it must be for Norman ever to forget her.

It is seldom that any one is blind to the feelings of attachment which they inspire. Yet it was so with Donna Mercedes. She saw not that Norman loved her. She had never thought it possible he should do so. To her inexperienced and "romanesque" mind, to love once was to love for ever; and in all her kind endeavours to cheer him she had never had a thought of self—never dreamed that she could for a moment replace to him the being he had so truly and devotedly loved. When therefore she saw that he gradually more and more sought her society—preferring to be with her rather than her brothers, she simply thought that perhaps she suited him better in his sadness; perhaps—and then she herself felt sad—reminded him of Mary.

But Norman loved Mercedes—with a love as tender, if not as vehement as that he had felt for Mary. He had been astonished at the change that a few short years had made in her; how they had developed all that was lovely in her countenance and character, and tempered or destroyed the few faults that had perhaps before floated on the surface of her mind.

No change is so rapid and decided as that from girlhood to womanhood. Men may be boys all their lives—may indulge in all the buoyancy and gaiety of early youth even to old age,—yet not step out of propriety, or bring their graver qualities into disrepute. Indeed, if well done, the occasional "boy," rushing forth from beneath the wig of the lawyer, the gown of the lecturer, the "décoré" uniform of the field-marshal, or even the cassock of the divine, may add an infinite charm to the "man," who is thus for the moment superseded.

But it is not so with a woman; she must step into a quite new existence. Her girlhood's laugh must be exchanged for the "quiet maiden's smile;" her mind, though it may retain its playfulness, must quit its volatility; her actions must be ruled by the tranquil, inward dignity of self-respect, and her manners moulded by her grace of mind, or, however "piquante," she will never be what woman should be: the soother, the calmer, the elevater, the refiner of man—the "anodyne pillow" of his heart, his winner to the gates of heaven!

Mr. Bruce had been, we have said, astonished at the improvement in Donna Mercedes; but not less was he struck with the change in her manner towards himself. He could not of course have expected her to be the same as when in childhood she had frolicked round him or they had together roamed the "brown heath and shaggy wood" of his own land, but there was a shrinking, a reserve, which was more than her mere age could account for; and withal a gentleness so akin to sadness, that irresistibly it excited his interest, and attracted his sympathy. His own heart was still heavy; for though much of the pain of his unhappy feeling had passed, yet still there was "the void left of a lost" affection, and he could therefore feel for anything that looked like sorrow. He was naturally open-hearted, but he could not, even to Mercedes, gentle as she was, speak of Mary; a calm brooded over her image in his mind which he dared not trouble or disturb.

He stayed by her then, his own heart closed, but anxious to open again in hers the "sparkling flow" of youth's bright happiness. He sought to cheer her, and by that kindly effort he himself was cheered. He sought to remove her diffidence and reserve, so devoted much of his time to her. He sought to find out whether there was any source of real uneasiness in her mind, or whether it was merely the dulness of a monotonous life that had oppressed her young spirit; and when he saw there was a something more, he sought with natural interest and curiosity to discover what it was.

Slowly the truth dawned upon him—slowly, but not unpleasantly; and irresistibly, step by step, as he gained an insight into her feelings, his own responded to them. He could hardly believe that for so many years his image could have lain unbroken in the depths of that pure heart; that the thought of him, absent, forgetful,—could have dimmed the morning of a life so bright, have stamped itself so indelibly on so young a memory. And yet he found—he felt it was so; and with what a wondrous charm did the conviction come over him—over him who had lived so long under the horrors of an unrequited love! It was like a bright warm sunrise to one, who through midnight journeyings had been battling with storm and tempest.

But he could not tell her he had read her heart. The secret seemed of such beauty he could not open it to the light of day. And so she knew not that he loved her, or that her love was known to him, but she lived with him beside her in unquestioned peace, and unexamined happiness; and as month after month passed by, she was happier still from seeing his unhappiness depart, though she thought it merely the effect of time, of resig-

nation,—and knew not it was herself. Still, his happiness was hers, and she was happy. Perhaps by that secret mesmeric power which in some mysterious way certainly does pervade the world, she felt the influence of his love, though its existence was unknown, even to her thoughts;—but be that as it may, for the time, her grief was gone and her peace and the gentle gaiety of her heart restored; and as they spoke together,—as they often did,—on heavenly things, lovelier worlds seemed to open to their view, and they felt that their mutual hope bound their hearts together in ties that could never be dissevered!

“Well, St. Clair!” exclaimed Mr. Bruce, one day as they were walking together “have you renewed your prostrations before Mercedes yet? Or was it all bravado—that message of yours? Do you know I never shall be quite satisfied—never shall be able to die in peace, till I have found out all about that same thing! ‘It is my thought by day, my dream by night.’ When do you mean to tell me?”

“Don’t you remember, Bruce—one day when we didn’t especially agree about everything—that I said I should tell only one person about it? Well, I have never told her yet.”

“Why not?”

“She was not curious.”

“Oh, but I am!”

“So I see; but I like a secret, it is a very marketable article, ‘*et je pose en principe de ne rien céder sans une indemnité pleine, entière, et préalable!*’ (and I lay it down as a principle never to yield anything, without an indemnity full, entire, and given before-hand).”

“‘*Préalable!*’ (Before-hand), that’s keeping the game in your own hands in good truth.”

“I suspect you have the purchase-money in yours, Bruce.—Tell me, my good fellow,” he continued, his laughing tone changing to one of earnest kindness as he laid his hand on his companion’s shoulder, “have you not a secret which you might think I should be glad to hear?”

“Me?” exclaimed the other, colouring deeply; “what secret can I have?”

“One—I think at least—that I should be glad beyond anything to hear.”

Norman walked on in silence—his countenance full of agitation. At last, stopping short, and turning abruptly to Mr. St. Clair, he said:

“I don’t know either, why I shouldn’t tell you, for hundreds

of times I have longed to have you to talk to about it. But yet, St. Clair, you'll think me the most weak, changeful, shallow fool in creation."

"Not if it be what I think, Bruce;—not if it be—that you love your cousin."

Then Norman poured forth all his feelings; told him of his happiness, his hopes, his affection—told him too, in the pride of his heart, how he felt sure Mercedes had thought of him continually while he was far away.

"And now!" he exclaimed, after having talked for ages—suddenly seizing Mr. St. Clair by the collar with all his old buoyancy of spirits, "traitor! or rather too trusty man! deliver up your secret—I have a double right to it now. You have had your '*indemnité pleine, entière, et préalable*;' so deliver, or perish! That prostration—that genuflexion—speak!"

"'Not upon compulsion, Hal,'" said the other, shaking off his grasp; "but in sweet courtesy and condescension perchance I may, some day. . . . Not now—so don't look fierce. Not now, I tell you."

Mr. Bruce fumed and raged, but it was of no avail. The secret remained a secret still.

"But tell me now," said Mr. St. Clair, "have you spoken to Donna Mercedes?"

"No," replied the other, quieting down in an instant; "I cannot bear to speak of it. It is a state too happy, a dream of life too perfect, to exchange for any reality, even greater joy."

"But does she know your feelings?"

"She feels them, I am sure."

"But you should speak; she must have suffered enough through these long years."

"She doesn't suffer now—she is very happy. Do you suppose I don't know every turn of her changeful countenance—every thought of her crystal heart? '*Par pitié, laissez-nous tranquils! laissez-nous respirer—jouir un moment dans ce bas monde!*' ('In pity, leave us in quiet! leave us to breathe—to enjoy ourselves a moment in this lower world!') But really, St. Clair, I know she is happy; and we have both"—and a shadow of his old sorrow came over his countenance—"both need of quiet and rest—and we find it in each other as we are. A word spoken,—and then come consents, and settlements, and congratulations—enough to kill the strongest man! No, this '*chiaroscuro*,' this summer-morning's twilight suits us best. I

would not break its charm, even for the sun's own glorious rays."

The charm of that "summer-morning's twilight" was however soon broken, and that "sun's own glorious rays" did soon arise on Donna Mercedes' astonished heart. It was impossible but that it should so be—Norman could not go on for ever speaking only a silent language.

We have said that she had never, as he had imagined, "*felt* his feelings;" and she was indeed astonished, when, while still thinking that she was looking on a rival in Mary, still soothing a desolate heart in Norman, she found she was the conqueror of the one—the beloved of the other. To her therefore, these "sun's rays" were indeed "glorious;" but Norman was right in thinking that to him the "morning's twilight" was most perfect, for then did come the asking of "consent," and what his fiery spirit little dreamed of and ill brooked—the delay in gaining it.

His was not a character that was either proud or vain, but a certain consciousness of superiority in most things over others, made him, without thinking of it, in real simplicity of mind, suppose that he should be welcome, at all times, in all places, and in all capacities; and he had never dreamed that if he wished to marry Donna Mercedes, all her kindred would not be enchanted at the idea. But the proud old noble looked higher for his admirable daughter; and would fain have seen her first in position, as she was in beauty. He loved his nephew however dearly; and in refusing his consent, was careful not needlessly to offend a haughtiness which was rather pleasing than displeasing in his eyes. He contented himself with saying that he wished Donna Mercedes to marry one of his own countrymen, and not to be settled in another land but his. But when he saw how vehement Norman's anger was, how deeply Mercedes felt it,—and thought too of the troubled state of his own land and how her affections had ever clung to her mother's home, his heart relented, and his pride gave way.

Mercedes too had again wept on Fernan's breast, had again wound round his loving heart with her sweet ways and fond affection—had reminded him, as she again pressed her gentle cheek to his, of his promise to be "her friend—ever—always!"—intrusting to his faithful ear the confession that it was for Norman that those former tears were shed—till pride, ambition—all—melted away before his love for her; and promising that he would indeed be "her friend—ever—always," he undertook to be her advocate with her father.

All was, therefore, after a time settled, and then even Norman found the "sun's rays" happy ones; though he still felt that the "greenest spot in earthly memory" would ever be that unacknowledged knowledge of his joy, that undisturbed, unspoken happiness which had preceded their rising.

"'Tis so in love! the faithful heart
From her dim vision would not part—
When first to her fond gaze is given,
That purest spot in fancy's heaven—
For all the gorgeous sky beside,
Though pledged her own, and sure t' abide.
Dearer than every past noon-day,
That twilight gleam to her, though faint and far away."

"And now again," he exclaimed to Mr. St. Clair the day before that settled for the departure of the latter, "traitor! or rather too trusty man! now again, I say—deliver up your secret, or die, 'and the last pang shall tear it from your heart.'"

"Tell me first," said Mr. St. Clair;—"is it pure curiosity that makes you want to know it?"

"Of course! what else should it be?"

"You once talked something about 'her vanity, or something.'"

"Ah, vengeful monster! how well you treasure up my words. But I will answer too in yours: 'She has no vanity!' No! it is simple, unalloyed curiosity—curiosity of the purest water—a perfect gem! Talk of your women! If I didn't consider curiosity the noblest quality of the human heart,—how were they libelled when called curious! No, if you want your really curious animal—your curiously curious animal—you have it in your—man! Perfect—as he always is in everything—he is your 'perfect curiosity.' And now—remember—I am—'Man.'"

"Well then, I will speak to thee."

And with infinite tact he told him the circumstances of the case.

Norman frowned and reddened when first he heard that Mercedes' affection for him had been guessed by another previous to his own knowledge of it. But when he remembered who that other was, how noble, how perfect in feeling—he was almost gratified that so delightful a secret should have deposited itself in such a casket; and when he learnt how naturally—how simply—how unconsciously—how in accordance with all her lovely character that secret had escaped from Mercedes' heart, his own felt melted in tenderness. And further—when he found in

answer to his own close questioning, that she had been aware of his love for another, and heard how beautifully, piously, magnanimously, she had borne that painful knowledge, he with difficulty restrained a burst of emotion; and prayed with fervency that it might be the last grief she should ever receive through him.

He was silent for a length of time; when looking up at last at Mr. St. Clair, and remembering that his sufferings had greatly been owing to this "secret" which he had maintained so inviolably for Mercedes' sake, his thoughts grew deeply painful, and his admiration of his friend's character rose if possible higher than ever.

"And you have never mentioned this, even to your wife?" he asked in a low, changed voice.

"No, it was not needed; our mutual confidence is too sure for that, and I felt that *she* would rather have had it left untold—so untold it has been—till now."

"God bless you for it, St. Clair," said his friend grasping his shoulder; "God bless you for it—for all you have been to me—all you have borne for her. If my never-slumbering prayers can gain augmented happiness for either of you, you will have them most surely, both here and in still brighter realms."

Ah! those "brighter realms!" Without them what were this dying world! Norman thought of that as the remembrance of Mary's pale cheek and languid eyes rose before him; and shudderingly he lifted up his fearful heart to God.

[The remainder of the narrative will be given in Mr. St. Clair's own words.]

CHAPTER LXIX.

An under-tone
Was given to Nature's harp, for me alone,
Whispering of grief.

MRS. HEMANS.

Somehow love is best when not even self-conscious ; when it lives in us as invisible and unfelt as our heart's pulse, or the breath we draw.

WE left the friends we loved so much, and proceeded to Nice. Mary was enraptured to inhale once more the soft air she had first breathed, and to look again on the scenes where she had spent her childhood—where we had first met—where our eternal union had begun. She delighted in taking me and my mother to all her favourite spots and all the endeared haunts of her earlier days—and rejoiced to see again her former friends.

After a time, to our infinite delight, a son was given to us, whose loved existence, though it could not add to our happiness in each other, yet opened to us a new channel of enjoyment. Mary's health too was improved, and all seemed smiling around us.

Yet still—I sought not to know why—I ever felt as if walking on a giddy height from which in a moment I might be hurled. I do not think there was anything of my former morbid temperament in this—I think it came from natural causes ; but as I would never stop to investigate them, their vague influence over me made me often feel as if in a dream.

And in looking back it is still the same ; that time appears like,—not a portion of my life, but an episode,—a bright, fearful, trembling episode, whose exquisite joy was too subtle, too ethereal to rest upon—the sense of its tenderness being kept too acutely alive by the shadowing evil whose undefined shape seemed even to hover around it. Had I had courage to name the fear I had to myself, and taken it in all faith and confidence to God, He would perhaps have taken it from my heart, or else have given me His peace and that felt confidence in His mercy which alone can compensate for human fear or tribulation. But my heart could not shape it into words even before Him ; so I had to go on,—like a swimmer floating in a glorious sea, exulting in every wave he meets, yet feeling that in a moment they

may curl their crested heads above him, and whelm him in their depths.

Oh! it is terrible to love an earthly thing with such a ceaseless consciousness of loving! Hereafter it will be our bliss to do so, for there, "the thing we love may *not* die." But here, to feel the constant edge of love's keen weapon against our hearts, when sharpened too by the fear of death—of separation—is hard to bear. I did not love too much—no one can do that—but the tenderness which ever hovers over what we fear to lose made me feel everything with "unsheathed nerves." There was no repose in my affection for her who was so dear to me; it was an ever-felt feeling for which our natures here are too weak, too limited.

Yet it was happiness, thrilling happiness to be with her always,—and when were we ever apart! And now—to see her with our baby—to trace her likeness in its little face, her smile on its soft lips, her action in its tiny hands so small and beautiful! Yet its long-cut eyes would be blue, and its soft curling hair light like mine. But that she said she liked; so both were pleased—both saw each other in this new gift from Heaven.

It was charming too to see my mother's delight; and never can I forget her dear countenance when first she took the babe, and "laid it in her bosom." The thought of Naomi instantly occurred to me; and throwing my joyful arms around her, I quoted the words that suited to such perfection: "Blessed be the Lord! for thy daughter-in-law which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him." Ah! better than "seventy" sons like me.

And then there came the remembrance of that day when she was singing the song of "Ruth" on board our frigate on our voyage home, when Norman Bruce's pain of heart flashed up in anger; and I felt how feeble was the tie that bound us then, compared to what now it was.

The autumn passed in happiness, for Mary seemed well, and my haunting fear nearly slumbered within me. But winter came—and then the slight cough—too slight for any ear but mine to catch—was heard again at intervals.

No one can know what the sound of that cough was to me! Scarcely more than a quicker breathing, it would rouse me from the most absorbing studies—disturb the deepest midnight sleep. No! no one can know what it was!—the "little cloud no bigger than a man's hand!"

Then came, as spring advanced, the added languor of look

and motion, and the sudden flushing of the cheek, speaking of inward weakness. Yet still she was cheerful, and went on as usual.

At length she perceived my uneasiness, and spoke to me about it. I shall never forget that day. It opened a new page in my existence, whose colour, though it has deepened, has never changed. Yet dark as it was—and is, its edges were ever tinged with gold.

My mother had been called to England on business; and in the cool of one hot summer's evening we had gone up on the hills. Donna Mercedes as a remembrance of her affection, had given Mary a beautiful little Spanish jennet, as docile as a lamb, and she rode up upon that and then sent it down, preferring to walk home. In a solitary place we sat down and watched the little vessels—like butterflies with their white latine sails—skimming over the still blue waters of the gulf. It was just about that time four years before, that I had been there first, alone—a vague, reckless, empty-hearted being. I was now with her, whom I had then not met, my heart over-full with strong affections, and my aim I trust a steadfast one: to glorify my God. I could but be thankful for the change.

How beautiful it was there—flowers blooming on all the mountain-sides! The wild tulip of spring, peculiar to that place, had given way to the more numerous blossoms of warmer months and the spring song of the birds was lushed into summer silence. It was so calm all around! The “murmurs of the mountain bee,” the stealthy rustling of the wind as it crept over the thymy pasture, was all that reached us on that breezy height. We had been talking of Bruce and of the happiness which his new prospects gave us; and I then at last told Mary about my mysterious kneeling before Donna Mercedes. She was much interested at the account of the early and constant love of that young heart, and rejoiced the more that it had found such happy ending. But then a sadness stole over her countenance; though as she caught my eye fixed on her, she smiled.

“What is it?” I asked.

“I was only thinking,” she replied, “how strange it was that such a trifle should have such serious consequences; though it has with truth been said, ‘It is only the littleness of man that maketh him esteem anything a trifle.’”

“It was no trifle certainly—my intemperate action—since it wrought you much of the sorrow you endured, and which has so shaken —”

“No, no, it was not that; it was the evil—though forgiven—

of others—for why, even could you have been unworthy, should I have been forced to marry one I could not love?—But Willy,” she added after a pause, laying her dear head upon my shoulder, as my arm supported her, “you think my health is shaken.”

Tremblings seized me as she began speaking so, and I could not answer.

“I have seen that you do for some time,” she continued, her tender voice growing tenderer still, for she knew the chord she was touching—“but I do not think you need fear for me—now. I am not perhaps very strong, but I have no pain or scarcely uneasiness, and I may get strong in time. But even, dear Willy, if not —”

She stopped, and putting up her hand—as I had so often seen her do in her child-like love to her father—she drew my cheek down to her sweet uplifted face, and kissed me repeatedly with I felt quivering lips. I could not return her caress, for my heart seemed like stone within me.

“Willy—dear husband!” she murmured, “we have been so happy together—your love has been so precious to me—and we may be happy here together yet, for perhaps a long time; but I saw you were uneasy, and I could not bear you should have one unspoken thought with me, even though a painful one.”

“How could I speak of it,” I exclaimed vehemently, “when I have not borne to feel I thought it?—I cannot—will not think it, Mary. You are not ill—not likely to be ill.” And I drew myself half away from her, striving to change into petulance the tremors of my heart.

She dropped her head again silently upon my shoulder—but the pressure was closer—fonder. She felt for me, and understood me. She was never angry—never hurt;—she knew I could not ever mean to vex her.

But oh! the difference between a vague fear, torturing as that may be—and an acknowledged, spoken one! I now looked upon my misery as a certainty,—a mere question of time—and the world seemed already gone. After the first shock however, I felt that she was right—that it was happiest—best not to have even that unspoken thought between us, and I told her so, and thanked her for her courage and her candour. She seemed struck by my manner and the altered tone of my voice, which I was aware of myself without having the power to control it, for a dull, heavy torpor had fallen upon me, which seemed to numb all my faculties. I was tranquil; but it was not peace—only the death of Hope! She looked up at me,—but I could not

look at her ; and the arm that encircled her hung heavily round her slight form, without having strength to press her to the heart that would have died a thousand deaths for her. Oh ! what sufferings human nature can live through !

No subsequent pain can ever surely exceed the first conviction of the danger of those we love. It is an agony quite apart from others,—frightful—appalling ! Mary saw what was going on within me, and tried to rouse me.

“ Wilfred,” she said, “ we are not going now to part. I may live on a long, long time. It is only that I am not strong, and any shock or illness might I think be too much for me. Dear husband—dear husband ! I should not have spoken, only I saw your fears ; and sometimes when I have spoken of the happiness of Heaven, I have seen you grow pale as if you thought that I was thinking it was near for me, and that has checked my speaking,—I have often now to think of what I shall say, and what I shall not say, and that is terrible between us. Why should we not think of death, Wilfred ? It is not an enemy.”

“ Not to you, Mary,—oh, not to you—but to me !”

“ We could not at least be long parted,” she said, her low voice growing tremulous.

“ Oh ! but a day !” I exclaimed passionately, as I threw myself down on the grass behind her, and buried my face in my hands.

“ Dear Willy !—dear Willy !” she murmured,—her voice full of tears, as she pressed her hand tenderly and repeatedly on my arm.

After a moment I tried to conquer myself ; but as I raised myself and looked at her, there was such a sadness in her dark angel-eyes, that I felt—she had not spoken to me too soon. All in a moment a perfect calmness fell upon my heart—a wondrous hushing of all fear and grief. I knew what my fate was—knew that the lonely sentence had gone forth for me ; but I seemed to accept it with open hands—with an elevation of feeling that bore me above this fleeting world. Yes ! I felt that I could yield her up to God without a murmur, though my heart might break.

“ Mary !” I said after a time, “ you are right ; death is no enemy—let us speak of it—of that which it will be to us—which it will open to us—that deathless world of perfect peace—that bright unsetting day—that presence of our God !”

She looked at me ; when seeing that it was real faith and peace that I felt, and that I needed not then her strength to strengthen me, her courage seemed to fail in a moment—all was

gone,—and in a revulsion of feeling, suddenly throwing her arms round me, she exclaimed in a tone of wild despair :

“ Oh ! what can make up for leaving you ? ”

“ Mary ! my own dear Mary ! ” I said, as almost unconsciously I stroked with both my hands the pale heavenly face that looked with such terrible love into mine—“ you will not think of that—you will not feel that when the time comes, and such glorious things are set before you. Is it not always those who go who comfort those that are left ? ”

“ But you, Willy ? ”

“ I shall not be long here, dear love. God will not leave me long. I could not live without you. ”

“ But our baby ! Oh ! you must live for him, if I must leave him. ”

In my thought for her I had forgotten for a moment that sweet creature ; and then, as I felt sorely that there was one for whom I could not but wish to live,—that my soul could not yet fly unfettered from the earth, my spirit sank, and I could only murmur :

“ God will rule all aright, Mary. I desire to be passive in His hands—to live, to die, to suffer, to enjoy !—Be it all as He wills. ”

She hid her face on my breast, and I heard amid her low sobs, her gentle voice exclaiming :

“ My boy ! my boy ! oh, to leave him too—to leave him ! ”

“ With God—and me, Mary ! Can you not trust him to our love ? ”

“ Oh yes, ” she said, straining me again and again to her poor heart ; “ but I know his little ways, all his little wishes. ”

“ God can teach me to know them, dearest—and you shall teach me. He shall always be near me, never leave me ;—and I am not a rough nurse, Mary, am I ? ”

“ Ah, gentlest, kindest, most loving ! ” she exclaimed. “ Yes, I can leave him to you, and he will not miss me—and I shall see him again. Oh ! I am weak and wicked, ” she added, as she raised her head and wiped the tears from her eyes, “ and faithless too—as if my Saviour were not in heaven planning my happiness and holiness, and tenderly considering all things for me. But so young, Wilfred !—And life did seem so happy to me now, after all my bitter suffering. ” And she covered her face with her hands. “ Yet, ” she added, after a silence which I could not break, “ He knows, He must know what is best ; and in His joyful heaven all grief will be hushed. Yes ! He will make my path light for me, and fill me with that rejoicing He has so often given me. And oh ! what happiness to have to look back not

forward, to death, and to watch and wait for your coming, my beloved, and be the first to welcome you where we can never more part. The joy of that thought begins to fill my heart even now."

"God would not leave you long, I felt, to your despondency, Mary. Remember how you used to delight in the account of the 'messenger' being sent to the different 'pilgrims;' and then their crossing the 'Jordan,' with the 'shining ones' waiting for them on the other side. And remember too, how for the one who had been fearful, the waters were made shallow. They will be so to you, Mary, doubt not—for yours is a merciful, a gracious God." And I folded her to my heart with a tenderness no words can tell.

"I will not doubt," she murmured. "'When thou art in the waters, they shall not overflow thee,' is His promise—and He is ever true. And those 'shining ones,' may they not be those who have loved me here? Ah! no angel's form could be to me like my father, my mother! How rejoiced should I be to see him happy! How wondrous to think that we shall meet in perfect joy, and love each other with an angel's love for ever.—Yet not the love I shall have for you, Willy; there must be differences there as well as here—and *we* shall love in heaven as we do here—we cannot better."

And her voice sank low again, for weakening human love had overcome her. I saw how exhausted she was, and pressed her dear head down again upon my shoulder, and told her to rest there, and that I would not speak. She lay there silent for a time, her eyes fixed—even as her thoughts had been—on the point where the heavens and the earth met—till at length they wearily closed. The air was still hot and soft, but I was fearful of her sleeping there, so gently lifted her light form and carried her, as easily as I would a child, along the mountain-side where the downward slope was gentle. She roused a little as I raised her in my arms, then smiled and murmured loving thanks as her head rested again on my shoulder. What an ineffable tenderness flooded my soul as thus I held her, pressed to my heart, bearing all her dear weight myself—protecting—fostering her!

Great Shepherd of Thy sheep! I thought too of Thee—how thou gatherest Thy lambs in Thine arms, and carriest them in Thy bosom! But for Thee, sole Saviour, what were we? Miserable wanderers in a thorny, weary wilderness—exposed to all the sorrows, all the sins, all the temptations of life, without a voice to comfort, a hope to strengthen, a hand to sustain! How elevating were my thoughts of Thee that hour, Thou blessed Being! How did I resign myself, my life, my happiness, all to

Thy gracious care! I had no power, no wish to resist. Like Abraham's, my bowed heart obeyed in silence, though I felt and knew that "God had provided Himself an offering." Oh! had I been suffered to rebel—had I been tempted to look around me for some "ram caught by its horns in a thicket"—some other thing besides the thing God called on me to resign, I must have died—I could not have endured the strife. But he was gracious to me, as He has ever been—and I was spared it.

The knowing we must part too, is not the parting itself; the presence of the beloved is such balm—coming into the heart with such power, that though we suffer, yet it is exalted almost into happiness—we cannot feel the misery that we know we have. How often in recalling that terrible time, have those sad, beautiful lines come to my thoughts :

"Then leave me now that I may know my grief!
'Tis but surmised whilst thou art standing by—

* * * *

Yet harder far to part than 'tis to die."

"Harder to part than die!" Yes, a million times! And as I thought of it, and felt—or rather perhaps only faintly "surmised" what it would be—I thanked my God that the bitter agony was to be mine—not hers.

The path soon became steep and rugged, and I did not dare proceed with her in my arms, so I gently roused her; when, refreshed by her short sleep, she leant on my arm, and we slowly pursued our way. We did not speak much, for our hearts were heavy, and I dreaded for her any added fatigue or excitement.

We were going along a path that wound round part of the hill, when we saw some one, slowly and with feeble steps, coming towards us. I thought I knew the figure; but it was not till he got nearer, that I saw it was my poor old friend the little Italian barber. I had sought for him immediately on my return to Nice, but found he had been ill and had gone away for change of air. Now however, it seemed he was returned; while his pallid looks and tottering limbs proved that the account of his illness had not been incorrect. He looked up as we approached, with heavy listless eyes; but what radiance of delight rushed into them when he saw who we were! In sudden ecstasy he threw himself down at our feet, and kissed, literally, the hem of Mary's garment. He laughed, he wept, and he knew not how to give vent to his rapture at seeing her again. But he soon became exhausted, and then, when more tranquil, he first seemed to be struck with the change in Mary's appearance.

How dreadful was the effect that his start and the horrified expression of his countenance had on me! When we are continually with people, the change that comes gradually over them is never so perceptible to us as to those who only occasionally see them; and anxious as I had felt, I had never been anything like aware of the fearful alteration that had taken place in her appearance, till I then suddenly saw it—as it were—with his eyes. The blow seemed to fall afresh upon my heart; but as he looked with a sort of terrified appeal to me, I strove to make light of it—I could not acknowledge the fear that held my heart so tightly in its dreadful grasp. “She had not been well—she would be better soon.” But he shook his head as the large tears coursed down his cheeks till his emotion almost overcame me, there was something in it so simple, so childlike, so prophetic! Those tears seemed as the beginning of such as could never cease!

He begged to be allowed to turn back with us; and going before Mary he cleared from her pathway every rough stone, every straggling brier that came in it—though one would have thought him scarcely able to have surmounted them himself. Once when we came to a very steep part, turning back, he put up his arm for her to rest upon; and most touching was the expression of his faded eye, as with sorrowful respect he lifted it to her, saying: “Se lei vuol prender questo debole sostegno?” (If you will take this feeble prop?) Oh! how grayen on my memory is every—the most trifling thing that that day occurred!

We parted with the good old man—for we could not persuade him to come to the house then though Mary made him promise soon to do so—and we proceeded home.

We had scarcely reached the door when the nurse met us, and with an agitated air told us that the child was not well—had been taken with sudden fever and restlessness,—that they had been uneasy, and had sent for the physician. Mary trembled violently, and a sickening fear came over me. We hurried to his room. He was lying in his little bed by the side of ours where he always slept, his soft cheek crimson, and his eye sparkling with fever; but on seeing us, he showed his usual delight—with his gentle, inarticulate sounds of joy, for he could not speak;—“Angels first taught him speech.” We knelt by him. Everything was done that could be thought of—but vainly—the fever still raged on. At length he grew drowsy; but still from time to time he opened his eyes, and smiled at his mother, and held out his little hands to her,—“to her who could not save,”—as if to ask for help. In a few hours he had gone

from us—faded, in his beauty, like a flower. I cannot dwell upon it!

We can bear to think sometimes of life's last scenes, even if the lost were as our own souls—where reason had enabled them to understand and bear their trial hour of suffering, and where a glorious hope was before them—but a child—one's own child! . . . Years have passed away, but it is still the same. I love to think of him as the happy being he was on earth—the happy spirit he is now in heaven; but that brief interval! . . . I can bear sometimes to speak of it—but to feel it—never.

CHAPTER LXX.

'Mid sounds of morn that gentle voice is not—
 But in his mother's heart the echo dwells.
 * * * Man's varied lot
 Of ills were prowling round his cradle-cot;
 But the all-pitying One hath snatch'd him hence,
 To shield from harm his guileless innocence
 In his own sheltering breast. Morn hath forgot
 Her looks of love; and 'mid the sounds of Even
 That gentle voice is not;—dun hues of care
 Come on, and liveries of wintry Heaven.
 He on his little orb sits smilingly,
 And sings, and sighs that all on earth so dear,
 Were but as happy and as safe as he.

I. WILLIAMS.

MARY's presentiment that any shock might be too much for her, proved miserably, fatally correct. From the moment of our unlooked-for trial she sank fast. Hourly I saw the change—her strength was gone; the golden sands of life were dropping rapidly away—and the glass was never to be turned!

All that had remained to us of our child had been hidden from our sight; but still his little cot remained by her side. He had yielded up his gentle spirit from her arms—had gone from his mother's to his Heavenly Father's bosom—but she could not bear to have anything altered or changed in the little couch where he had lain. "The very pillow that his head had pressed was as a picture" to her; and often in the night-darkness, and at morning dawn, would she put out her hand and rest it on the place—all cold now—where his little form had been—where she had so often soothed him off to sleep. He had no restless hour now that needed her comforting; and though she wept—how

should she not weep?—yet—and increasingly as she felt her own strength fail—she was thankful for his happiness.

“How near this makes one feel to the world of spirits,” she said, as before he was taken quite away we stood gazing at his sleeping form. “I seem to go there with him, or to feel that he and all Heaven are with me here, only veiled from my sight till death enlightens it. And this—even this,” and she stooped and pressed her hand on the still brow and golden curls, “will be all given again. We lay him in the grave in ‘sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection,’ and we shall see him again. Oh! Wilfred!” she added, turning to me, “how I mourned—you remember—at the thought of leaving him, feeling that I best knew his little ways and wishes. How needless—how unbelieving—were those tears!”

“God knew the love that made them flow,” I answered; “and He has done for him more than even your heart could have asked—could have borne to ask. You will have the more to go to, Mary—the fewer to leave.”

I was selfish in touching that string,—yet it seemed the only one left of a broken lute—Her look of high hope and faith gave place instantly to one of pain, as she sorrowfully shook her head, and stooped over the little coffin to hide her tears.

It is ever a satisfaction to me to remember that none but those whose “hands had been lift up in prayer for him,” ever touched his dear remains, or bore him forth to his last resting-place. The ashes even of those who have been subjects of redeeming grace, are sacred. They have once been, and they shall be again, the Temple of the Spirit; and holy reverence is mixed with human love, in our thoughts of them.

“Yea it is the poetry of death
To care with mindful love for all so dear—and dead.”

Abundant was the sympathy—kind and feeling—that we received—but from none more touchingly than from our poor old friend, the companion of our last walk. He was ever at the house; often sitting humbly on the steps with quiet despondency, till he saw some one of whom he could make inquiry about us—and bringing fairest flowers to deck our child, and make bright and cheerful the couch of death. And when he was laid in the still earth—daily were wreaths hung on the cross that rested above his grave, twined by his feeble, affectionate hands.

Little did I think, when first I saw that old man in all the

volatile animation of his green old age (forming rather an amusing item in my list of remembrances, than anything else), that he would prove one whose sympathy of heart and touching poetry of nature, would mingle his memory with all that was most holy and most dear in life! We should do well indeed, to despise nothing in this world! However lowly it may seem, God may raise it up to good, often great, purposes. I had many friends in Nice; but in my hour of trial none were to me what that poor man was—I could endure his presence when I could endure no one else in life. Once—the only time that Mary was equal to the sad, soothing effort of visiting the place where our darling lay in his “guarded rest,” we found him there. The fresh wreath was sending its sweet scents on every side—he was sitting on the ground, his hands clasped on his knees and his eyes fixed in vacant sadness on the little tomb. He did not see us for a time; but then the colour flushed up in his sunken cheek, his dark eyes flashed through the sudden tears that flooded them, and rising as quickly as his feebleness and agitation would allow, he hurried towards us, and kneeling down before Mary he took her hand and pressed it to his eyes. It was the first time he had seen us since our loss. He seemed incapable of speaking; till rising, he looked at her for a moment—then hurried away, striking his breast as he exclaimed: “*Mi fa piangere il cuore.*” (It makes my heart weep.) It was the last time he saw her,—she never left the house again.

CHAPTER LXXI.

But oh ! sweet friend, we dream not of love's might,
Till death has robed with soft and solemn light
The image we enshrine ! Before that hour
We have but glimpses of the o'ermastering power
Within us laid.

MRS. HEMANS.

Glide softly to thy rest then ; Death should come
Gently to one of gentle mould like thee ;
As light winds wandering through groves of bloom,
Detach the fragile blossom from the tree.
Close thy sweet eyes, calmly and without pain,
And we will trust in God, to see thee yet again.

BRYANT.

GRADUALLY one little thing after another was given up, till at length Mary could bear only to be moved from her bed to the sofa—and this, all in the course of a few days—so rapidly did this grief drink up the springs of her frail life. At times she suffered much.

"Wile my dear husband away," I heard her whisper once to her faithful servant, "that I may moan without restraint. It is not murmuring, dear Susan," she added, "but it eases me so much. But I cannot do it when he is here."

She knew not that I heard her ; but I made some excuse to go, and then—noiselessly, lest she should hear me—I stole back, and lay down on the floor by the bedside, so close she could not see me. I could not be away from her, though I covered my head not to hear the sounds that tore my heart to pieces.

At calmer times she would talk with me of the happiness she felt.

"You do not think me selfish, Willy ?" she said. "It is not the thought of the joy that is so near, nor of seeing my child again—the thought of leaving you would overbear all that. It is that God puts happiness into my heart, I know not how. But He is there Himself, and He is happiness."

I could but rejoice that it was so, and at such times the bitterness of the parting-death seemed almost gone for me too, and we spoke of her near home as of one decked with all pleasure for her by Him who had "gone before to prepare a place for her."

There is "such a deep rest in the thought of God's eternity," that to image her enjoying it with Him, brought an unspeakable calm and quietude upon my soul. It was only when our mutual love was thought of!

Often had we spoken together of the bright coming of the Lord again upon the earth.

"None can know, of course, when it shall be," she said to me, the day before she died. "I used to hope it would be in my time—that I should be saved from the bitter waters and the dark valley. But I find no darkness in this border-land; and if the waters are bitter, I do not taste them, they shrink away before my feet. You told me they would be shallow for me, Wilfred, and they are so. An easy death, my beloved—a gentle, easy death! and such a golden light around—beyond."

"Your happiness shines so even on the darkness of my heart, Mary, that it seems almost as if I were going with you," I replied; "I can trust God so perfectly for all—for everything.—

"I do not ask to see the distant scene,
One step's enough for me."

"I am so glad—so happy, Wilfred; it is such delight to know that the Heaven which will be perfect joy to me has begun already to spread its happiness on your heart. What a blessedness it is to feel no misgiving for myself or for you—to know that the cleansing blood has washed us both. Oh! how can any one wish to work out a cold, hard salvation for themselves, when they can owe it to so dear a source. That love of Christ—how perfect!" And she closed her eyes as a glow of tender happiness rested on her pale countenance.

I sat silently watching her; I would not interrupt the communing I knew was going on between her spirit and Him who had so blessed it. But soon she looked up, and continued—following the current of her own thoughts, though brokenly:

"Those who do not know Him, doubt His love. Poor Captain Normanton thought he never could be forgiven. He did not know the heart of Christ. The same in heaven as on earth, He 'receiveth sinners.' What a happiness! what a happiness!"

She paused again, and I sat silent by her. With unutterable sadness and tenderness I watched to gather in all the radiant beams of heaven that shone through her soul on mine, and to store up in everlasting remembrance all her sweet and graceful words. Soon I should hear them no more; but I knew

that "the stream which had given its sweetness to my earthly fountain was imperishable—was ever full and ever flowing."

She spoke but little that day, her weakness was so great; but she liked me to read to her, and pray with her, and speak to her, and kept up a constant communication by the pressure of her dear hand, or by her looks of love—and often by her heavenly smile, even when she could not unclothe her eyes. All pain, and her wearying cough had quite left her; and she felt, as she told me, in a state of unutterable happiness. She could not realise our parting, she said; it seemed to her as if the "Angel who stood on the sea and on the land had already lifted up his hand to heaven, and sworn that time was no more."

I *lived* each moment of that day; my mind seemed instinct with life all over, to catch each angel look, each bright word, each token of that undying love which tore yet soothed my heart. I was full of swelling emotions, elevated yet oppressed; and in bewilderment, I could scarcely at times have said whether I were in this life, or—where.

She slept well for some hours that night, but towards morning grew restless and wished to be laid upon her sofa. I took her in my arms for the last time—alas! how light a burthen—and how dear—and laid her where she could see all the beautiful bay spread out before her. She felt much refreshed, and an unwonted strength seemed given her. My heart died within me—I felt what it was. The sun had not yet risen, and the cool green light of early dawn lay on the sky and the reflecting waters. An English frigate was lying off there; and I thought of the time when I had first been there, and we had so often together looked at my beautiful vessel as it lay painted on the waves, or swaying to and fro in the light breeze. She thought of it too, for she glanced from the frigate to me, as a quivering sigh sprang to our lips. I saw her wipe away a gathering tear. She turned to me again; and taking my hand in both of her's, folded it to her heart.

"Willy," she said, "I bless my God so much for having brought—your ship to Nice. How merciful to have prepared—from the foundations of the world—such happiness for one so small—and low; to have forecast—each word of love and look of kindness—all which has made my life so blest.—What mighty love!"

"What then has it been for me?" I exclaimed; "thoughtless, wild, foolish as I was, to bless me with such love as yours—as His! I was so utterly ignorant of Him, when He was preparing for me such blessed teaching."

"Yet at times my faithless heart grieves, Willy—that you should have loved what must—have loved me—when—"

I hid my eyes and could not answer.

"Yet," she continued, with her low silvery tones clear again, "it is not parting! Speak to me often, Wilfred—I may be very near. God may let me often visit this dear earth—and then whom should I seek—but you? What now could keep me from you?—What could then? No! think of us as near—my boy and me—near—near."

"But oh! should you see my sinful heart," I exclaimed, "you could not be happy."

"God is," she replied; "He sees your heart and mine—and the worse hearts of those—who do not love Him, yet He is 'Happiness;' and I shall have learned of Him—His holy patience—His loving-kindness, and shall know why—He still sees good to leave the burthen—of sin in the redeemed heart."

"Yes, God sees us," I replied, "and yearns in kindness over the worst and vilest, and His happiness is, as you say, Mary, perfect still. It is all a mystery, a glorious mystery! And you will look on me, if God permit, with the same tender love you have ever done—tenderer, more loving, it cannot be—in heaven."

"Oh yes!—I think I shall be with you here,—for God loves this earth—and blesses it,—and surely I may be—wherever His blessing rests. He gives me the joy of thinking that—to save me from what this hour must else—have been to me." And she clasped my hand still nearer to her heart as her eyes closed, and the large tears fell over her face. I laid my head against her shoulder. We were both silent.

The sun had now risen, and pouring its rays in floods over the hills, gradually lit up every object. The bay was studded over with little vessels which one after another caught its ruddy glow on their white sails, and wave after wave sparkled in the light, leaving the little margin of the shore that they washed, a wavy silvery line as far as the eye could reach. There had been heavy rain in the night, and the frigate began now to unfurl her sails to dry them in the warm beams.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, when she saw that busy work begin, "the last time I watched that done—it was to take you from me, Wilfred. We were soon to meet again—and sail together—and yet I wept. You too will weep—when I spread my heavenly sails—and for a time must leave you;—but think of the long voyage—we shall go together,—and our darling,—and so many others,—on the boundless ocean of Eternity! There

will be no jarring feelings there, Willy—nothing but love—nothing but love!”

She was gazing upwards, and it seemed as if a real glory from the inner heaven streamed on her face;—it was like an angel's.

It had been settled for her to receive the Sacrament that day.

“I am so thankful,” she said, “to be stronger just now. It is good of God—to give me a few hours to speak to you—and take the tokens of His love. He bid us do so—in remembrance of Him—till He come again.—Till He come again!—that glorious day! Yes, and it is sweet—to have anything to do—in remembrance of Him. Amid all my love for you—Willy, He knows His love lies deeper still—in the very ground—of my heart!” And her voice choked, as if the unutterable feeling were too mighty for her frail strength.

CHAPTER LXXII.

I love to think that the Lord in His humanity looks tenderly upon this mortal soil on which He sojourned in His wondrous life ; and that here, perhaps, in these very lands, made holy by His grace and power, " we may rest again."—ADAM GRAEME.

WHEN the communion-service was over, and the good clergyman had with deep emotion taken leave of one he had known and loved for many years, she turned to me as I knelt by her side, and murmured :

" Now I have almost done—with prayer. Wilfred," she added after a time, " praise God continually—when I am gone,—for then our voices and our souls—may join before His throne. Turn your prayers even to praises,—for I cannot join in those, and we must be one—quite one."

Her head rested on my shoulder, and the expression of her large, dark eyes, in whose soft depths there lay all human and all heavenly love, was almost too powerful for me. I pressed her hand continually to my lips, as I gazed as one entranced upon her, my heart dumb under its overwhelming weight of feeling. I could not withdraw my eyes, they seemed spell-bound almost to terror. It was a relief when the door at last opened, and her maid came in with some refreshment. She could take but little ; and when the poor girl lamented she would have no more, she said, smiling :

" I have all I need—dear Susan. Yes," she added, clasping her hands, and looking upward as a sudden radiant solemnity fell upon her features, " all I need ! ' He that drinketh of the water that I—shall give unto him—shall never thirst, but it shall be a well of water—springing up to everlasting life.'—Everlasting life!—Gift of the Father through the Son—Holy Spirit—purchased possession !" And she seemed lost in heavenly contemplation. Susan stood by, the silent tears coursing down her cheeks. Mary turned her soft eyes on her after a time, and holding out her hand, drew the poor sorrowing creature down to her, and kissed her with a long, sobbing kiss.

" There is happiness before you—so much happiness !" she said at length—for she knew she was engaged to one she had been attached to before she left Nice. " Use it well, Susan—let none go,—it is the loving care of God to give it you.—Hold it as

His dear gift,—and you'll not forget Him in it.—God will—always bless you.”

When we were again alone, she begged me to bring her beloved plant—her passion-flower which she had always carried with her—and put it by her side. I did so, remembering sorely as I lifted it, the time when I had carried it with so gay a heart to deck her summer window. The sun had made its blossoms again open gloriously, and she lay for some time looking at it with pleasure.

“‘All blessed memories will now—for ever—be associated in my mind—with this flower: God's love—Christ's love—and yours.’ Do you remember—when I said that, Willy?” And she turned to me her almost glowing face.

My eyes alone could tell her that I did—for the remembrance—the scene—the hour—were rushing through my heart. Did I not remember it?

“Perhaps,” she added, after a few moments, “I may see—this very flower again,—again watch over it—with heavenly happiness. Flowers will bloom upon the earth—when it is renewed—in righteousness; it is only the things that ‘offend’—which will be consumed—by that dreadful fire—these are so beautiful!—Say to me those lines—you know?” And she lay so calm—so happy as I said them.

“‘Relics ye are of Eden's bowers,
As pure, as fragrant, and as fair,
As when you crown'd the sunshine hours
Of happy wanderers there.’”

“Yes,” she said with animation; “as pure, as beautiful! And they will crown again—our ‘sunshine hours’—when God has made—‘His tabernacle with men’—and Eden is more than restored by Him. I love to think of coming back again—to this dear earth—the scene of all I have known—of happiness; where first I have tasted of God's love,—first known you. Yes! I may see—and train—this plant again; the thought may be more—than fancy—and falls upon my heart—so soothingly!” And with her trembling fingers she strove to arrange one of its wandering shoots. But she could not do it, and her feeble hands fell helplessly down. She smiled at me, but her lip quivered. “Your care now,” she said tremulously;—“yours—for a time.”

How many memories hung around that plant—her companion through many sunny, and oh! how many stormy hours! What

feelings had crowded around its eloquent flowers—what tears had watered it—what deep, deep sighs had made its slight leaves tremble—what constant eyes had watched it, and gentle hands—stronger then—had trained it! Not a spray or shoot but had its tale to tell—its chronicle of deep living love, of joy, or sorrow!

She watched me languidly, as, by her wish I did what she had tried to do and then replaced it with its sunlike flowers in the window; but it was evident that the little burst of strength that had flashed up was fast failing. I saw with terror a fearful change in her countenance when I returned to her.

"Mary!" I exclaimed, hastening to her.

"Mary!" she repeated, raising her eyes with a look that seemed to enter heaven, "that blessed name!—the first—my Lord pronounced—when risen from the dead. My Lord—my God," she faltered, "wilt Thou not also—call me by name—Thy feeble—weak—but loving—child?"

"Oh, He has called you, has blessed you, and made you all His own," I exclaimed, as for a moment I seemed lifted above my grief; "and where He is, you too shall be."

"With Him,—yes, with Him—anywhere—with Him!" And she lay tranquil, but that her lips moved; and listening intently—so dear was every breath to me—I caught the words, with pauses between:

"The distant—sound—of my—Redeemer's—feet,
Coming to—fetch me—to my Father's—home."

Then she was still—still as death—Oh! was it that? I dared not think.

But soon rousing, she looked round as if awakened from sleep; and seeing me bending over her in agony, she said:

"I shall soon—be gone—dear Willy!—Walk—in our sunny—garden—beneath—the bright heaven—and think of me—so happy!"

I stood as if insensate. I knew not what I felt.

"Let me," she said suddenly raising her head, "let me—have—my boy's—pillow."

With the chill of death at my heart, I rose to fetch it for her—the first time it had been moved since his dear head had pressed it. I laid it beneath hers. Oh! what was the power that hindered me throwing my own down beside her, and dying e're she died?

"I shall see him—soon," she murmured, as she turned her cheek caressingly on the pillow;—"his radiant—face!" And

again she closed her eyes while a happy smile crossed her face, and her lips moved as if she were speaking soft loving words to the babe—angel she longed so much to see.

I knelt beside her, and in sudden agony threw my arms around her.

“Oh, why should I be left?” I exclaimed, as the intolerable thought seemed to drive me to distraction. “Why should I be left—a miserable wretch—away from heaven,—when all I love is there?”

“Hush—Willy—hush,” she moaned, as if my sudden frenzy troubled her too deeply,—and passing lovingly her pale soft hand over my cheek and lips. I hid my face beside her, trying to crush down my towering agony—and struggling for calmness that I might not lose a moment—a breath of her expiring life. Her hand lingered gently on my head, and she murmured prayers to God for me. I heard them, and felt their soothing power;—and God had pity on me.

At last I looked up, and there were tears upon her cheek as her eyes met mine. She put up her face to kiss me, fondly clasping her arms round my neck.

“God will—surely—comfort you,” she murmured softly—and so feebly—“my own—dear—dear—Willy! He will fill—the waste place—and soon—you will be—with us—with Him. You have been—such an—angel to me—no word—no look—but of an—angel.”

She stopped exhausted, and I could not speak, or sigh, or scarcely breathe. Silent rivers of tears flowed without pause or sob or effort. I had no power to check them—I seemed to have less life than she had. Then suddenly disengaging herself from me,—

“Now let me go,” she exclaimed in a clear, firm voice. “My God! my Saviour! my joy! my life!”

She lay looking upward—when a sudden light rushed into her eyes.

“My boy!” she exclaimed in ecstasy.

Her look remained fixed some time on high, but its fervour gradually passed away, and the heavy lids closed. She turned her cheek to rest it again on mine, and threw her arm round my neck. I caught the murmured words: “For ever!”—There was a deep, low, happy sigh

How long I remained there I know not. I seemed in a sort of golden trance, as if some of the light of the Glorious Presence into which she had entered, had reached my soul! . . .

After a time I was aware of some one's opening the door, and of making with conscious falsehood, a sign for them to go, as if I feared her being disturbed. I could not let any one intrude into the mighty secret that was between her and me, and God and His holy angels. A mortal's thought would have desecrated it.

I knelt there, all feeling quieted within me—almost at last stagnant—till the shadows were all changed in the room, and the slanting rays poured in from the west. The cheek that rested on mine had become cold and colder, and pressed heavier and heavier; there was no breath in the parted lips, no love in the closed eyes, no stir of life in that warm, warm heart—that cold, cold breast!

Again the door opened; but now I had no power in my stony frame to move. A step came on—that reverential step where death has fallen! And then the cold arm was gently taken from my neck, and the dear head was laid upon the pillow, and I was urged—though without word spoken, to rise. I rose, and looked round me quite bewildered,—my eye even resting on her some moments without my understanding what it was I looked upon.

Then burst forth the torrent—the agony. Oh, that such things can be, and we live through them! I heard my own cries, and scarcely knew that it was I whose agony was rushing forth in those wild sounds. I was only conscious that in dashing myself to the ground, I turned from her;—I could not disturb that form, or ruffle a fold of those white garments. . . . Sounds of tears and lamentation I now heard mingling with my own,—but quieter, as a far echo. Then a trembling, broken voice spoke:

“Oh! sir, think where she is.”

It was the “Peace, be still,” of the Lord.

I rose to my knees, and leant my head upon her couch and prayed;—convulsive prayers and sobs mingling their grief and faith before God's throne. Then came her beseeching back upon my soul—to “turn my prayers into praises;” and such a flood of happiness passed over me as I thanked God for His mercy to her—for having redeemed her from this world and all its struggling fears and painful sins and wearying strivings—that it almost seemed as if our voices did indeed join before the throne, and pour forth together living praise to Him that sat thereon. Then, worn out, overpowered—with that clear joy upon my soul, I sank down by her side, and slept calm, happy sleep.

But oh! the awakening!—The dim, dark sense of misery, so

large in its undefined blackness!—And then the truth—as I looked up and saw that pure and quiet face and moveless figure like marble in the moonlight that lay so chilly in its coldness upon her! I could not have her moved—she lay so tranquil there—the arm that had enfolded me in death crossed on her unheaving breast, and, dimly gleaming on the pale wasted hand—the ring she had asked of me and never taken off but to put beneath it the outward pledge of the dear bond which had united us! Oh! they would be all pain, those tender memories, if the future were not a continuation of the past! Surely—surely there are no abrupt transitions in God's works! With Him all changes are growths—harmonies—developments! I could not take off that ring; but thought as I covered the cold beloved hand with bursting tears, that when she rose again, that pledge of a love so God-given and so true,

“One-thoughted, never-wandering, guileless love!”

might almost be left there still.

The dawn had risen and brightened into day; and the light—shining through the rose-ribbons that lay with the soft lace upon her cheek, gave to it a mocking glow of life. But I would not have had it so. The storm was now all hushed within me, and I could rejoice that she was safe and had passed from earth's poor stage to God's high heaven. How empty the world seemed to me!—the outer world—while the inner, seemed bright with thousand glories!

After a time I walked, as she had bid me do, forth in the garden, beneath the glowing heaven, and thought of her—“so happy.” I felt that I must soon follow her—or anyhow that all must be well in His beloved hand who had taken her home.

Oh! it was very resting, that utter peace, that unruffled, unreflecting, unconscious calm! And if at times wild thoughts flashed across me, I rushed back to that still form, and all was quiet again. I had no feeling of grief in that hushed, holy presence,—God was so fully there, and she so blest!

CHAPTER LXXIII.

"Mother," and "Home."

There are but given
Two names of higher note—"Father," and "Heaven."

Poems and Pictures.

I LAID her beside "that" little grave, and still the same calm was mercifully given, and for some days that bright dreamy light floated around me—though

"Over all things brooding slept,
The quiet sense of something lost."

It was mercifully done by Him who knoweth what we can bear—but it was scarcely consciousness, scarcely life. I seemed not on earth, yet not in heaven; I could think of nothing, feel nothing, clearly.

Then gradually I roused to more consciousness; and in the deep ingratitude of my earthward heart, my first craving was for my mother. I had written to her when our child was taken, and knew, as she had not written in reply, that she must be on her way to us, to share and soothe our grief. Ah! how little did she think what grief she had to soothe—and how one was passed beyond its power!

But I longed so for her—craved so for her—the only being who could understand me—could weep the same tears over those sweet memories! I roamed restlessly about the empty house and garden, scarce feeling their emptiness from anxiety for her. It seemed as if I put off the thinking of Mary in my intense anxiety to have that loving mother to speak to of her—of her, and all my grief. I watched from the windows each boat that neared the shore, each carriage that came up the road,—and thought: "Would she never come!"

No, she would never come!—She was gone!—had died ere she knew my grief. A sudden attack of illness had ended her dear life while yet the letter was unread that told her that our little one was gone. I fainted dead upon the floor—and wakened only to delirious fever. Oh God, "Thou hadst vexed me with all Thy storms," and my heart was crushed within me.

It was weeks before I was sufficiently recovered to leave the

house; and no one but those who have lived through such things can comprehend the agony of that slow, unwilling return to an unwelcome life—to an empty, empty world! Those desolate mornings! those wretched, mocking, golden evenings! those massive, shapeless nights! No voice—of all so dear—to bless me—no speaking eyes to watch and answer to my looks,—no accustomed hand to rest in mine, and speak dumb, eloquent language! Ah!

Many friends came around me—all were kind; and I doubt not it was well for me to force myself to speak, and try to show gratitude for their kind exertions. I feel it now—warmly; but then it was torture to speak and hear others talk of what seemed wild wasteful nothings, compared to the vast unmeasured thoughts and giant forms that filled my soul! Oh! when the least of them were Angels and Archangels—what it was to sit and answer when they spoke to me of the petty shifting things around! Oh! there are times when “God alone can speak to our hearts without fatiguing them”—and truly this was one of them.

The dreadful excitement to my mind at last forced me to insist on being taken out into the air—and then I had quiet; and the air too revived me, and after a time I could walk a little, and roam along the shore and nearer vales.

Then it was that I found the sympathy of my poor old friend so soothing in its quiet influence. He had helped, they told me, to nurse me in my wild and wandering frame; and though, in the delicacy of his mind, he had never since come before me in the house, yet now he would follow me at a distance,—always within call should I want anything, yet never so near as to seem to claim my notice. I did not know him then as I did afterwards, or should have begged him to come near, and have begun then an intercourse that afterwards proved so comforting and beneficial. I strove indeed, at first to escape from him, wishing for nothing but what I carried in my own peopled heart; but still wherever I went, there, slowly following me was he.

When rather stronger, I would wander along the mountains' sides where the slope was easy; and then first, our special intercourse began. He never came near, as I have said,—but stopped if I stopped; and if I rested on the dry grass he rested too,—sometimes for hours till I again set forth. But as my strength increased I wearied his weak limbs; and seeing him stop and pant one day when I had mounted a steeper ascent than usual, I went to his side. We parted then no more; and kindlier intercourse never had I with living friend than with him. He had loved *her* so much—from the time she was a tottering infant,

having seen her so often at her nurse's house—and as she grew in years and loveliness, his affection had grown to idolatry. Oh! who would not have loved her, “created” as she was, “of every creature's best?” And as we talked and wept together over her dear memory, a softer sorrow fell upon my heart.

Ah “it is not good for man to live alone!” Our very outward senses prove that the Creator formed us for loving intercourse with our kind. How does the eye convey the look—the ear the tones of love into our hearts? How can the clasp of hands speak volumes to the soul?

He was indeed a comfort to me—that old man—never going beyond my thoughts, never drawing them back from any heights to which they had soared, or uttering one word that grated on my heart. Then too what pleasure, what joy and comfort I felt in leading on his soul to those bright regions where only as yet in poetic fancy he had roamed! How many hours did we sit upon those mountains' sides talking of God and godly things—he always seated at my feet, lifting his dim but kindling eye in humble love to mine. Ah! those were blessed hours! And when he spoke to me of the sore darkness and blindness of his countrymen,—then the high thought arose that I would try upon those mountains to bring the “gospel of peace” and proclaim the “way of salvation.” I became ashamed of my “indolent brooding, my cumbering of the ground;” and saw at last God's meaning in sundering me from all ties of earth—snatching from me even that last dear refuge—my mother's heart—that I might “be about my Father's business.”

From that time my misery became less sore. I struggled against it, for I knew that grief, like sin, was Satan's work and should be resisted; and often when I prayed for grace and comfort and that the bitter agony might be stayed, I have seen almost visibly, the dark cloud pass from before my eyes and God's bright light shine there again. The great end of my existence seemed revealed to me, and God gave me strength to follow it. The wondrous charm of home had, I now felt, kept me too much enthralled, and made me neglect the vast work which God intrusts to all to whom He commits His true riches. My selfish happiness was therefore dashed to the ground that I might be forced into a higher, more devoted sphere of action. Alas! that God's gifts should ever be turned to a snare by him who is His enemy and ours—that our own weak hearts should aid him in the work! But God was merciful to me His sinful servant, and I can thank, and deeply trust Him.

“Weakness, and want, and misery are mine;
Strength, riches, glory—are not these things Thine?”

Living now more for others I was relieved from the continual pressure of morbid regret, and the presence of the Lord was ever with me. My mornings I dedicated to seeking out the poor and miserable in the dark dens of wretchedness that were so rife around me, and in the evenings I climbed the breezy hills, and visited the mountain villages—choosing that time, because then I could often meet the peasants returning from their work, and gather them around me—beneath God's heaven, amid His glorious works, to hear His glorious word. How melted was my heart at seeing their earnest attention, their awakening desire for those things; and as I followed though but feebly in the steps of that glorious Saviour who on other mountains saw "the multitudes" come out to hear Him, I felt that even amid the mysterious sufferings of that "Man of sorrows," there must yet have been minglings of celestial joy.

I will not say that my heart did not often sink within me as descending from the exhilarating mountain air I sought my lonely, desolated hearth,—I had been more or less than man not to have done that—or that I did not often in looking on those dear graves long for my own to be dug beside them—my soul to be at rest and at peace in God's bright heaven;—but still it was not what it had been before. My path was now I felt, shone on by God's clear blessing from above—and that sustained me. I often thought of that blessed man* who had laboured in Alpine regions amid all the savage horrors of winter's snow uncheered by one friend or companion; and remembered how with his own hand he had cut down the rose-tree—his only one—because he felt that it had stolen away moments that might have borne on their flying wings a ransomed soul! Ah! what were my poor services compared to his—and what the devotion of my heart when weighed against that one act?

My poor old friend was left far behind now that my youthful vigour was somewhat restored to me; but still we were often together. I had prevailed on him to come and live in my house, where my beloved wife's faithful servant did everything to make his feeble age comfortable. She had married the person to whom she had been engaged, and they both lived with me; and greater devotion no human beings could have shown. It was a great comfort having them; for young as I was—not three-and-twenty when I had gone through all my bitter sufferings—and being so

* Felix Neff.

much from home, it required the eye of faithful love to watch over things for me and to see that all my home contrivances for the poor creatures around me were conscientiously and feelingly carried out. My dearest wife had left me all her large fortune, but I could not bear to keep it. Some portion I retained to carry on works she had wished continued, but the rest I had divided between relations of her's who had more need of it. I was advised not to do so by some of my friends, as,—they were pleased to say,—I should spend it so much better; but I thought it could not be better spent than in doing that which would take away all cause of reproach from one who had his Master's honour in keeping; for the world might know nothing of how I spent the fortune that I kept, they would only remember that I had kept it, and I had a horror of giving the "Enemy this occasion to blaspheme," and letting it be thought that whilst I, as a Christian, professed to follow after the riches of eternal life, I was equally bent on securing those of this. If one must pay for one's pleasure, surely the best pleasure is the "standing void of offence before God and man." I had alas! so few to provide for, that my own fortune was ample—abundant for my wants, and left me much besides to spend on others; for oh! what a sacred trust is fortune! and how deep our need of prayer in the use of it.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

He polishes the Jewel year by year,
 With ceaseless care, and chisel sharp and keen,
 Shedding Paternal drops of pity clear,
 Where the hot edges of the blade have been.

He wills His glory should by thee be shown ;
 Thy patient cheerfulness, thy quiet faith ;
 Thy heavy cross borne silently alone,
 In His dear steps who loved thee to the death.

He is thy Father, and thy heart can tell
 The deep, deep meaning of that holy word—
 A Father from whose blessed lips "Farewell!"
 Shall never through Eternity be heard.
 By Him were all thy bright affections given,
 Return them now all sanctified to Heaven.

C. N.

It was now declining autumn ; and I saw with grief that the autumn of the days of my poor, my dear old friend, was declining too—and fast. He could no longer accompany me even in my shortest walks ; and soon he never left the house. It seemed as if I cast a withering, blasting glance on all I loved. But it was well—all was well!

I was with him always when at home, for I saw that soon he would be numbered with the blest ; that he must soon "solemnly put off his feebleness, and go forth alone."

I buried him beside my child—for he had renounced the Roman Catholic religion—and I had before secured for my own "body's length" the place next her I loved. Often have I stood there, and thought what joyful beings that little spot of earth would one day bear, when "the dead shall hear *His* voice and come forth out of their graves." "Oh! who would not love an earth in which he has buried his treasures, and which holds them in keeping for the resurrection?" Who would not love Him who is "the Resurrection and the Life!"

Ineffable communings have I had in that place ; and with what comforts did God visit and refresh me! At times indeed, strong grief would wring my spirit, and in desolation I would cast myself down there where *my* Mary lay ; but at other times it

was my brightest joy to think of those I loved, so safe! and if an infant wept, or I saw a mourning-mother, "I thought upon my dead, and gave God thanks." Ah! it was

"A thing o'er which to shed,
When stars alone beheld the drooping head,
Lone tears! yet oftentimes burthen'd with the excess
Of our strange nature's quivering happiness."

Yes! God "never left me, nor forsook," but always raised my drooping heart there where my treasures were—"earthly to heavenly joined."

"I think,"—to use some of Lamartine's words in one of his beautiful stories: "God had compassion on me, seeing I was destined to live without wife, without children, without father or mother, and visited me oftener, and more intimately than others to comfort me and prevent my finding life wearisome."

I was by those grassy graves one day, when from behind me, a shadow fell across them. I turned. It was Bruce!

I had never written to him of my sorrows—why should I disturb his joy. I would not even have an announcement put in the papers, lest it should reach him. But at length he heard of all that I had suffered; and though just married to Mercedes and in Scotland, he instantly left her and hurried off to me. What friendship! And how he felt for me! He besought me to come back with him. The idea was terrible to me! But he urged it—for his love's sake—and how could I refuse?"

Yet it was torture to go—but I went;—leaving my servants in charge of my house—as they have ever since been,—and engaging a devoted man to live there and work among my people.

I went with Bruce, and saw one of my earnest prayers answered, in the greatness of his happiness. I grieved that my affliction should throw a shadow over it, and strove against it. But that was more difficult now amid the many materialisms of common life, than in the ethereal atmosphere I had breathed at Nice—ethereal both to body and soul. But I have no doubt the strife was good! 'Twas the plunging of the hot steel into the cold water that it might be hardened and bear a brighter polish! Ah! that it had effected that more than it has!

Yet there too, among those rugged heaths and rough hill-sides, was work to be done; and in doing that, God and His comforts are ever with us. And after a time, to please Bruce, too—for I

felt I could not do enough for one who had done so much for me and mine—I accepted an appointment on board ship again, and found I had work to do there also.

Once more I heard from Lady Davenport. She spoke of my lost love,—tenderly, feelingly, admiringly! She said her own health was sinking—her life failing. There was a solemn tone in her letter and a kindly one that had never been before.—Perhaps “the decay of nature was teaching her the gentler secrets of the heart,”—perhaps she had a better monitor. God grant it!—I never heard from her again.

I often visit Nice—drawn there irresistibly! and though I am now still following my profession on the stormy seas my heart is ever there, and there I feel I *must* go and take up my abode again. On its clear heights, “the lonely world seems lifted nearer heaven;” and those dear graves still send repose into my heart. My people grow in the love of God, and I have no happier moments than when among them. The love of God must ever produce love to man—His creature. “No vessel can be full whose overflowings do not drop upon the earth.”

THE END.

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